THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *
1053
494

ADONIA,

A

DESULTORY STORY.

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Seething-Lane.

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A

DESULTORY STORY,

494

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

INSCRIBED, BY PERMISSION, TO

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUGH.

VOL. III.

There is a kind of justice which a man ought to observe towards himself, even should he exist solitary on the earth: he should govern all his affections and habits, that he may be enslaved by none.

MADAME ROLAND.

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ADONIA.

464
THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. XX.

Came he right now, to sing a raven's note,
Whose dismal tone bereft my vital pow'rs?
And thinks he that the chirping of a wren,
By crying comfort from a hollow breast,
Can chase away the first-conceived sounds?

SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH the Comte De l'Avignon's apparent remorse, which succeeded the first discovery of Ferdinand's elopement, corresponded very well with the reports in circulation respecting this young man's origin; and, though the strong superstition, which the cowardice annexed to vice

vice [illegible] his bosom, goaded his conscience with this consequence of his ill-performed vow, there was another more predominating principle of his mind, which was not less interested; whatever grounds, therefore, might appear to justify the Abbé Poverlerie's insinuation, that in his zeal to recover Ferdinand he only sought to defraud him of his rights, the fact was, there was nothing farther from his designs; for it was solely on the *establishment* of these rights that the accomplishment of his own interested views ultimately depended.

The unfortunate father of Ferdinand, involved in very peculiar circumstances of embarrassment relative to his deserted son, had been in a manner compelled to entrust him to De l'Avignon, a man almost a stranger to him, and (still more singular) to continue him under his guardianship even after he had discovered that this trusted-stranger's views were of the most avaricious

cious and nefarious kind. But the fidelity which he could not bind by promises he had more effectually secured by other engines; and, previously to that scene of solemn pageantry described by the Abbé, (which was but a seal to a more extensive contract,) he had deposited with De l'Avignon another large sum of money, with an agreement between them, formally registered, signed, and witnessed, on both sides, that this sum was to be doubled to De l'Avignon, or doubly forfeited by him, on Ferdinand's coming of age; according as he should have acquitted himself in regard to the concluding and most important article of the contract,—the restoring Ferdinand to his father's family.

The substance of this agreement had been suggested by De l'Avignon himself, who, seeking to render the stranger's unfortunate necessity of confiding in him subservient to his avarice, had betrayed the meanness of his principles by the un-

generous rapaciousness of his demands, and thus heightened the Englishman's distrust; who, already disposed to doubt and execrate the whole human race, left no means unemployed to render it binding, and the detection of its non-fulfilment inevitable. In the earliest period of his guardianship, De l'Avignon had at least done justice to his ward's birth in the *style* of his education; and, though he had never investigated his principles,—neither sought to confirm the good nor to eradicate the bad,—he had treated him with a degree of kindness and distinction which won the youth's gratitude and love; and De l'Avignon easily persuaded himself that his duty was amply performed, and even prided himself on its consciencious discharge. But the moment the young man became his rival, all obligation to moderation or forbearance was forgotten. That which was before indifference towards him, or at best but a very slender tie of friendship, was now rancorous hatred; and

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De l'Avignon, under the influence of passion, (which in the moment always exalted his self-love,) felt assured that he was justified in every outrage against him; and that Ferdinand's conduct, in daring to parry his insults, was marked by unpardonable insolence, and ingratitude of the blackest die. Far otherwise did he argue now St. Loudon had fled from his protection,—driven thence, first, by detestation of his vices, and lastly by his reiterated insults. He had most probably lost his expected reward, and incurred a heavy forfeit, which his extravagancies left him little ability to pay; and, whilst enraged against St. Loudon, and execrating his own folly, he felt that were he but restored to him, there was no concession, however abject, which he would not submit to, to wile back his confidence, and regain his wonted power over him. His search was fruitless; for his eagerness defeated itself, and sent him on an extensive circuit which St. Loudon had never thought

of making. In shunning De l'Avignon for the present, he had only kept himself concealed, and neither quitted Paris, nor conceived it necessary to use the latter precaution beyond a certain period, which he supposed would terminate De l'Avignon's remaining friendship together with his pursuit. Hoping for better fortune and trustier friends to assist him at some future period in his design of elucidating his origin, yet too proud for solicitation or dependence, St. Loudon, without imparting his views to any one, sought a temporary subsistence in the employment of his literary talents; and had retired to a humble lodging at no great distance from his former residence, where, from its vicinity, De l'Avignon never thought of directing his search. Change of name he had indeed adopted, as a necessary prevention of the intrusions of those young men of his former acquaintance whose society would have impeded his new avocations; but, excepting this, and that he hardly ever

appeared

appeared abroad, or associated with any other class of people but booksellers and authors, with whom he had connected himself, and to whom his person was as new as his assumed name was unknown, he used no extraordinary precautions for concealment: thus, in not appearing to shun inquiry, he afforded no grounds for suspicion.—But what De l'Avignon's most sedulous researches had failed to effect, accident at length made him master of, and he burst unexpectedly on the young author's retreat. The unfeigned joy which expanded itself on De l'Avignon's countenance, and animated his words, checked the kindling anger of Ferdinand; and, while his sparkling eye and imperious tone demanded by what right he was thus intruded upon, his heart smote him with the recollection of former kindnesses; and the habitual affection of childhood reviving to a temporary softness, the colour faded from his cheeks, and his faltering lips left the resentful sentence unfinished.

finished. De l'Avignon marked his tremulous emotion, and hoped every thing from it. But he was deceived in the character of him whom he expected to work upon:—Ferdinand was as steady in principle as he was occasionally impetuous in conduct. Warm, grateful, generous, his heart glowed spontaneously to the slightest touch of genuine kindness; but he never permitted the sensibility of the moment to vanquish any decision which had been framed in the hour of cooler reflection; and he could not long be deceived by these involuntary impressions in favour of De l'Avignon. St. Loudon had now convicted himself of the folly of cherishing that passion for Adonia which had been the deciding cause of his difference with De l'Avignon; and, losing even the faint degree of latent hope which had for a time lingered about his heart unbidden, he had almost persuaded himself, that it was some guardian-angel who interposed to separate them, and that he ought rather to shun than

than to avail himself of every opening which might lead the way to a renewal of this intercourse, so dangerous to his peace. He had now tasted the comfort of freedom and independence, and, exclusively of his repugnance to ever again bartering these invaluable possessions for the precarious favour of a man whom he no longer respected, he not only despised the Comte as a man of worthless character, but dreaded him as a mysterious incendiary, whose kindness or persecutions, being alike unaccountable, were equally to be suspected and repelled. His mean submissions when passion had betrayed him into insult, the mystery and evasion which he had ever observed when pressed on the subject of his birth, and the arts he had employed to wile back his affection and confidence, after having openly evinced an intemperate hatred against him,—all corroborated the surmises which had been whispered to Ferdinand respecting his real motives for keeping him in ignorance of his name

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and rank; and, though he languished to obtain the important secret; though nature pleaded for the happiness of being folded to the paternal bosom, or bedewed with the warm tears of a mother's love; he had determined rather to trust to time or chance for some other channel of discovery, than resign himself again to the power of an insidious enemy and a discovered hypocrite.

The Comte saw his inflexibility with wonder, and employed all the arts of entreaty and remonstrance to persuade him that he should in future find him only a zealous friend and kind benefactor. But, when he found that neither flattery nor solicitation could effect his purpose, he changed his style, and employed the more cutting weapon of cool deliberate reproach, which the command he still retained over his own feelings allowed him to convey in a strain of plausible and pointed eloquence, every word of which was a dagger

to Ferdinand's heart. He laid before him in review all those errors of his earlier life, into which dissipating amusements and profligate example had temporarily betrayed his inexperienced steps. He reminded him how *he* had pitied and forgiven him;—that, far from treating his licentious wanderings with indignation or austerity, he had only laboured to reconcile him to himself, and to soften to his self-reproving heart, as the excusable failures of inexperience, lapses from virtue which he well knew were in themselves subject to the strongest condemnation; and he then branded the return which was made for this commentitious lenity as ingratitude and injustice, worthy only of the dissolute being whom he had thus described.—To the former part of these accusations, Ferdinand's candid bosom instantaneously pleaded guilty, but the charge of ingratitude rouzed his indignation; and the merit which the Comte claimed, for that toleration which he well knew had been rather calculated

to licence than to correct the errors he reproached him with, provoked from him a spirited and just retort, and a renewed declaration of his fixed resolution never again to hold converse or friendship with the Comte de l'Avignon. The keenness of this reproof; the strong aversion and contempt which it expressed; but, above all, the immoveable firmness of Ferdinand's repetition of a decision so destructive to his insiduous friend's schemes; proved too much even for the art of the interested and hypocritical De l'Avignon to combat. The smothered passions, raging in his bosom, burst uncontrouled from their uneasy covert; and, scarcely permitting his tongue the liberty of invective, he instantly drew his sword, and called on Ferdinand to defend himself. The superior coolness of the latter enabled him to wrest the weapon from his hand, but this action only exasperated the Comte still further; and his loud abuse, breaking forth into boisterous torrents, alarmed the people of the

the house, and drew into the room several witnesses of a combat which, however, they had not the power to prevent.—Ferdinand's moderation was conspicuous to every one: he strove to remonstrate; he laboured only to allay the fiery passions which he had unintentionally rouzed; and, though compelled to employ his sword, he still used it only defensively. At this juncture the attention of the alarmed, but now passive, spectators was called to another object by the entrance of Monsieur d'Orville, (the benevolent physician whom we have already mentioned,) who, pale, trembling, and presenting an impressive figure of venerable woe, rushed between the combatants, and tremulously screamed, "Oh! do not, do not, murder him!" Wholly lost, however, to thought and reason, the Comte was now as madly careless of his own safety as he seemed determined on the destruction of *him* whose preservation had so lately engrossed all his solicitude; and, casting D'Orville violently from him, with the

the look and voice of a fiend he thundered out, "Oh! that this stroke could exterminate ye both!" and rushed again on the first object of his fury. Ferdinand's sword was ready to defend its master; but it now did more. The impetuous Comte missed his aim, and, receiving his opponent's weapon deep in his side, instantly fell. His wound was pronounced mortal; and, notwithstanding that Ferdinand's forbearance was evident to several witnesses, and that every one who was present at this mad engagement voluntarily contributed their testimony to his innocence, he was put under an immediate arrest, and remained two months in confinement before the first opinion of De l'Avignon's physicians could either be positively confirmed or contradicted.— D'Orville was his daily visitor: every meeting cemented a sort of painfully-parental affection which he had conceived for him; and at the end of that time, having heard that De l'Avignon was declared

clared out of danger, he obtained his release. Prevailing on Ferdinand to put himself under his guidance, he carried him privately to a remote part of Languedoc, where lived some relations of Madame d'Orville, his late wife; among whom he had long intended to spend the remainder of his days, and where he thought Ferdinand might remain for the present secure from the Comte's inquiries.—D'Orville, as has already been hinted, was a man of singular character; but the peculiarities which had been stamped upon it by a too-keenly exercised sensibility, and the premature appearance of age which his sorrows had given to his softly-interesting aspect, served only to render his amiable qualities more conspicuous and impressive. His heart was an overflowing fountain of charity and good-will to all men; but so softened by misfortunes of his own, so hopeless of happiness to himself, that his sympathy with others' sorrows placed him on the rack of remembrance;

brance; and the comfort which his benevolence diffused could bring no return to himself that was not chilled by the whispered reflection that "his own was gone for ever!" Yet there seemed nothing unmanly in his sensibility; for, though its excess might be termed weakness, (since he strove not to subdue, but even seemed wilfully to encourage, it, by indulging in sentiments of a romantic and visionary kind,) it never impeded his active duties, but was silent and uncomplaining. Though in years he was but little turned of forty, it had added upwards of ten more to his countenance: possessed too of a considerable fund of polite learning, and almost every other requisite for shining in the great world in some distinguished part, it had nevertheless depressed his genius and circumscribed his pursuits. It rendered him in society uncommunicative and passive; sometimes wholly abstracted, and always negligent of forms; yet did the dignity of his demeanor silence witty criticism, and a gen-

a gentleness blended itself with his melancholy which few hearts could behold unmoved.—Such was D'Orville, whose widowed affections had at length found in Ferdinand an object grateful for his kindness, and ready to return his regard with the quickest enthusiasm of youth. The fancied likeness to his son seemed daily to increase; it was indeed the strongest link which bound him to his new friend; for the loss of this only son was the misfortune which hung heaviest upon his spirits. It had been the privation of his *last hope*, the concluding stroke to a series of afflictions against which he had till then borne up with manly fortitude. By allowing himself to dwell upon the idea, that *this* was the dissolution of his last domestic tie, the final extinction of all the hopes and attachments of his youth, it had insensibly gained so deep an ascendency over his mind, that nature seemed to have been arrested here, and the birth of new

hopes, or the formation of new schemes of happiness, struck his bewildered reason as inconsistent or impossible! His amiable dead Eugene appeared all that had bound him to the world, and still gave to recreation whatever charm it yet retained for him; for, with a fanciful wildness of thought, he indulged his sadness, by picturing some affinity to this dear cause of his regret in every feature of nature which attracted him as beautiful. He loved to trace the progress of a pure and genial spring, because it presented in successive pictures the early course of *him* whose summer had been intercepted by death! And when he heard any young man commended as rising to eminence, or distinguished by the mild and endearing virtues, he caught instantly some trait of character which had been conspicuous in Eugene, saw that *his* was still superior, and again lamented his untimely end. Nor were these mournful parallels confined alone

alone to the features of the mind. D'Orville never entered an assembly of young people where he did not look out with plaintive solicitude for the air, the countenance, the touching voice, which were ever present to his fancy. Here he was generally successful; for imagination aided the search, and every graceful figure he examined, every intelligent eye or beaming countenance, had its corresponding mental endowments combined with it, in proportion as he felt it press upon the string which vibrated to the memory of Eugene. St. Loudon's presence was even painfully rapturous to him; for the resemblance he saw in him was not of that partial evanescent kind which he was sensible was all that he had hitherto discovered; it was general and universal. Whether he smiled, spoke, or softened into melancholy, still it was the voice, the smile, the pensiveness, of Eugene. St. Loudon was sensible of his sincerity, when he said

that

that his society was become necessary to him: he respected his character, and was gratified by his kindness; and, willingly embracing his protection, as he felt himself too young and too destitute to depend entirely upon the success of his own exertions, he determined to continue his literary pursuits under his auspices.

They reached in safety the place of their destination; where, at a neat villa in one of the most romantic parts in Languedoc, we will for the present leave them, enjoying that moderate independency and middle style of life which is subject neither to the fatiguing demands of fashion nor the inelegant embarrassments of poverty. Ferdinand had now no taste for expensive pleasures, for his mind was too correct to suffer its wishes to wander beyond what his own means could purchase; and Adonia's

nia's image, the short and faded dream of impracticable hope that had floated before him in her society, tinctured his mind with those graver hues which were best in union with the retirement he had embraced, and the companion with whom he shared it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

—— Look well at me!
Of friends, crowns, country, kinsmen, father, 'reft;
Love-lorn, of reason more than half beguil'd;
Heart-broke, and struck from out the book of hope;
What could I do but die?

BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

WHEN the Comte De l'Avignon, contrary to the first prediction of his physicians, found his mental faculties reinvigorated, and his health gradually recovering its former tone, the awful thoughts suggested by approaching dissolution, the remorse and superstition which

which had rendered the prospect of death intolerable, gave place to other feelings; and the objects of his guilty pursuit, a while obliterated by terror from his remembrance, resumed their former ascendency even before he had quitted the bed of sickness, where the world which contained them had seemed for ever receding from his view. Adonia de Rosier usurped her wonted dominion over his senses, and her father's final ruin was, no less than ever, the projected sacrifice to his treacherous ambition. In the midst of his meditations on these subjects, he was rouzed by the unexpected news that Ferdinand had again escaped him; and immediately afterwards his perplexity and alarm were doubly augmented by learning that the Abbé Poverlerie, who had attended his sick bed and nursed his superstitious fears; and to whom, believing himself dying, he had entrusted all those papers relative to Ferdinand which were of so much consequence to himself; had

absconded exactly at the same time, and was supposed to have directed his flight towards England. De l'Avignon could not doubt that they were gone together; and, persuaded that the wily Abbé would endeavour, by a display of fictitious honesty, to reap to himself that golden harvest which had so long been the object of his own labours, his rage and disappointment knew no bounds. A strong desire of revenge fired his bosom, and he immediately issued large offers of reward for his apprehension. He soon learned, however, that this stimulus was from him unnecessary; for a vigorous pursuit of the fugitive had already been instituted by order of the Chancellor. But the Abbé, far from harbouring the designs which the Comte ascribed as the motives of his flight, was now occupied only by providing for the preservation of his own life and liberty. A very black and sanguinary conspiracy against the monarchy had been detected, in which he was

was convicted of bearing an active part. On such a discovery, especially at present, having every reason to know himself liable to condign punishment, he had availed himself of the timely warning of one of his colleagues, and immediately absconded with the utmost precipitation, carrying with him only a small sum of money, and such of his papers as came first to hand. Among these, the writings entrusted to him by De l'Avignon were indeed accidentally thrown, but he was ignorant of their being there: yet, had it been otherwise, it was not probable that he would have made any use of them, as it was hardly possible that they could be converted to his own advantage without farther proof; and, had he even been freed from his present perplexities, he was a man too little interested in the affairs of others to bestow a moment's time or thought towards their lawful restitution. De l'Avignon, in the mean time baffled and enraged, still confined

to a sick room, and retarding his recovery by the irritation of fermenting passions, was vowing against him the most unheard-of vengeance, anxiously and eagerly watching from day to day for the expected tidings of his apprehension. He had now learned the ostensible cause of the Abbé's hasty departure from France; yet his first suspicions remained, and in the course of a few weeks they were farther confirmed, by intelligence that Povelerie had actually reached England in safety, accompanied by a youth of whom the description left no doubt upon his mind that Ferdinand also was now for ever beyond his reach. Several other circumstances, besides the exact coincidence as to the time of their leaving Paris, rendered the belief general that Ferdinand and the Abbé had taken their departure together. Strengthened in his mistake by the concurring opinions of every body from whom he inquired tidings of Ferdinand, his rage and disap-

pointment

pointment knew no bounds. He found, however, that the effervescence of passion boiled over only to torment himself, and at length dropped the pursuit. His health revived, and he once more appeared abroad, like the demon of destruction, breathing a sharper malignity, a keener eagerness, to hasten the fate of the unfortunate De Bellefonde, and triumph over the defenceless innocence of his lovely daughter. In the former his machinations were but too rapidly successful: revived by his return, the faction against De Bellefonde resumed its former vigour. Fired as if by a new sense of injury, his persecutors became tumultuously clamorous, and no one seemed willing or daring enough to oppose them. All were either tamely passive or united in prosecuting his downfall. It seemed utterly forgotten that his administration had ever been extolled, or his person beloved. His lynx-eyed justice and steady integrity had drawn upon him the hate and envy of

those who had tempted them in vain. His unaccommodating melancholy had offended the gay, his haughty reserve had frowned contempt upon the insignificant, and every reptile, whom he would once have stepped aside to avoid, now erected itself into importance, to contribute its venom to the cup he was to participate of. —The trial, which had before lingered, and in its issue had once seemed even doubtful, was now accelerated by every engine of revolutionary power, and hurried to a barbarous close. As if immediate death were too merciful a doom for one who dared to think disgrace more terrible, he was sentenced, first, to a twelvemonth's close imprisonment in one of the gloomiest dungeons of the Bastile; and afterwards, at the expiration of that period, to suffer an ignominious death. De Bellefonde received his sentence with calm magnanimity; for, now that his misfortunes were drawing to their climax, his feelings suddenly rose to something above the mur-

muring melancholy of his former sorrows. They were deep, but composed; hopeless, but resigned. Yet, in his gloomy dungeon, with no part to sustain which could exercise his towering soul; no longer surrounded by malignant spectators, whose pity and whose sneers were equally to be avoided, and before whom he had rallied the dignity of his nature, that he might assert to the last the superiority which he owned; he thought upon his children, and his thrilling heart revolted against confinement. Week after week had his impatience counted the slow-moving hours which he passed in compulsive imprisonment as so many lingering ages, though he was not then excluded from all intercourse with his family; for the high-spirited, active-minded, De Bellefonde, accustomed to unlimited controul over others instead of being controuled himself, and to act as soon as to will, could not but find the fetters irksome which the pride of conscious virtue forbade him to think

think ignominious. But now, shut out from every consolation of society, deprived of every aid of employment which might arrest the current of painful thought, and divert his brain from the maddening reflection, that his already-orphaned children,—his young and beautiful Adonia, on whom his spirit hung with a tenderer, a more painful, fondness,—were destitute and unhappy, while *he* still lived, yet could not succour them,—when he thought that he should see them no more, yet live to ruminate on their lost endearments,—the interval cruelly allotted to him, ere the emancipation of death would shut out these pictures from his view, appeared so much longer than that which he had already passed, so endless and intolerable, that, as often as he computed it, a new and cold dagger seemed to lacerate his heart; and the towering, high-stretched, spirit, as loosened from a rack, sunk, fainting, into a death-like despondency.

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The habit of gloomy thought once admitted, its dominion grew despotic, and his fancy caught a wildness which threatened to overturn the sway of reason. Seated upon the damp floor of his dungeon, he would remain for hours thoughtful and motionless, till, rouzed by some new image just pictured by his imagination, that turpitude of mankind which caused his agonizing solicitude for his children, and always formed the ground-work of his ruminations, he would spring up and burst into a convulsive laugh,—a horrid laugh! which strove to express contempt, but ended in anguish. Adonia was his principal theme; his satires on mankind, his pictures of human misery, and dread of human vices, were all pointed by his anxiety for her,—the lovely resemblance of her ill-fated and ever-lamented mother! He had once been passionately devoted to poetry, and his memory was filled with "snatches" of melancholy verse, which now, in his wan-

dering moments, sometimes recurred to him. He thus found an exercise for his mind, in endeavouring to combine what time and other pursuits had disunited. From this new employment he derived a melancholy gratification, though it served but to point more keenly the consequent bitterness of reflection he felt. His most favourite poetry was that which was gloomiest, or could be brought into parallel with the subjects of his own misery. Of this class was an ancient North-British ballad, of a strange and rugged measure, and an unpolished style; which his wayward fancy found peculiarly congenial, as it accorded with the train of woes which his busy and visionary search into futurity had pictured out as the far-from-impossible lot of his dear deserted Adonia; and he often found himself muttering verses of it, without clearly knowing whither his imagination was conducting him. As in some measure assisting to precipitate the determination which

at length released him from his bondage, we will make no apology for transcribing this poem at full length; especially as his appropriation of it serves to place in a striking light the total revolution of mind to distrust and misanthropy of this once warm and confiding philanthropist.

ETHEL,

THE DAFT LASS O'LOGIE.

I.

"WHO is yon poor shivering maiden?
Her pallid cheeks hath sickness or hath sorrow prey'd on?
She seems forlorn;
See how the storm
Bends her thin form!
And with what tremulous hand she holds her scanty plaid on!
Ah! now 'tis torn!"

II.

Dost thou, by youth's false promise cheated,
Expect to find
In human kind
One faithful mind,
When by that faith self-interest were defeated?
Hear how poor *Ethel* was entreated,
And give thy expectation to the wind!

III.

She was Lord Norval's only daughter,
And many a wealthy baron sought her;
To these, still cold,
Her heart she sold
To a poor youth for love: she told,
With simple smile, that gen'rous love ne'er taught her
To value gold.

IV.

But, while her prospects all were smiling,
Fortune was but the maid beguiling;
A sudden storm doth guide
Its faithless tide;
And, crushed in all his pride,
Forsaken, poor, at ruffian fate reviling,—
Her father died!

V.

V.

The mother, with a fever'd heart fast breaking,
Saw, one by one, each trusted friend forsaking
Their spoil'd abode :—
She, too, no firmness shew'd ;
Stern frown'd her pathless road,
And, quite o'erwhelm'd, and to despair betaking,
She dropp'd life's load.

VI.

And Ethel, mild as dews that weep in morning,
An orphan was, exposed to fortune's scorning ;
And yet (transcendent fair !)
Nought could impair
Her lofty air,
That shew'd a mind which virtue's hand adorning
Had gifted rare.

VII.

"But had not Ethel still a grateful lover?"
No! grateful hearts are not of human race:
Soon as he did her fortune's wreck discover,
Her lately high-priz'd face
And beauteous form lost all their grace ;—
He left the trusting maid, and play'd the rover.—
"O miscreant base!"

VIII.

Yet she, 'mid all these hardships bending,
Her brother rears;
His tender years,
With no parental arm defending,
Seem'd left to her: the boy she cheers,
And for his sake, all selfish sorrow ending,
She dries her tears.

IX.

Far from their scene of woe removing,
On proud self-conquest bent,
Fair Ethel went;
For him, each toil of labour proving,
Six years were spent;
And mem'ry, lull'd by virtue's smile approving,
Bestow'd content:—

X.

When lo! that infant-peace invading,
Her lover came,
Profess'd a flame
To Ethel's high-soul too degrading
To win its aim;
But, by this shock, each grief her breast pervading
Renew'd became.

XI.

Insult, she thought, was worse to bide than sorrow;
Worse than her fate, who for the morrow
No shelter knows!
And, when a hand beloved throws
The jagged arrow, those
Who brav't must more than mortal firmness borrow,
Or sink beneath their woes!

XII.

"But Ethel's brother would with fond affection
Kiss off each tear;
The grateful youth would say, with pleas'd reflection,
'Tis now my turn to cheer!'
His youthful heart thy cynical inspection
Sure need not fear?"
O visionary, hear!

XIII.

By brib'ry bought, the villain's schemes he aided;
And when these fail'd,
And nought prevail'd
To move a mind by virtue firm persuaded,
With a new horror he her breast assail'd:—
This boy, whom she from poverty had shaded,
Left her to fate, and with her lover sail'd!

XIV.

And as their vessel, fast receding
From her strain'd sight,
She saw with wild affright,
All desolate, her bosom, bleeding,
Seem'd plung'd in night;
And, crush'd by woes on woes so fast succeeding,
Her reason vanish'd quite!

XV.

"O vengeance! may that brother's years increasing
No comfort see!
May every vulture of remorse unceasing
His partner be!"
Hot youth! thou need'st not pray for ought increasing
The wretch's misery:—
Lo! I am he!

XVI.

Strange as my crime, the punishment severer
All speech defies!
I would be kind, would gladly strive to cheer her;
But, whene'er she spies
Atrocious me (in vain remorseful!) near her,
A horrid brightness fills her eyes,
And she like lightning flies!

XVII.

Once, only once, she ventur'd near me,
(With leaves and flow'rs fantastic she was spread !)
She wildly smil'd, and then, by phrenzy led,
With nod defiant thus she said :
" Thou profers't love ? but know I hate and fear thee !"—
" And why art thou afraid ?"—
" Thou'rt like my brother, whom I lov'd so dearly ;
The cruel, cruel, brother who from Ethel fled !"

XVIII.

Youth ! thou'rt untried ; thine eye of hope is beaming
With confidence elate ;
But *trust not man !* e'en pity, gen'rous seeming,
A selfish feeling is ; and, such my state,
I seek it from remorse t'escape :
(For who remorse can hide ?) but world with horrors teeming !—
Remorse and pity both
May come too late !

De Bellefonde, after may fruitless efforts of memory and straining exertions of fancy, had connected all the verses of this rude specimen of the genius of a then-

then-barbarous nation. Three months from his sentence had elapsed since his removal to a darker dungeon, and in all that time he had neither seen the face of friend nor foe. He was repeating the verses aloud with sparkling eyes and pointed gestures, when his door was unexpectedly opened, and a person, hastily whispering him to prepare for a visit from his children, again left him with equal precipitation. Astonished and overpowered, De Bellefonde experienced no pleasure from the news of this unhoped indulgence. His limbs were seized with a trembling, and his sunken eyes, distended in their sockets, with a wild glare of perplexity seemed to look for his children, yet dreaded to meet the sight. Presently a faint light was brought in, and De Bellefonde waited in excruciating and phrenzical expectation the arrival of his visitors. His suspense was not long; and the loved, yet dreaded, Adonia was the first of the group presented to his quivering view.

view. Disengaging herself from the Marchioness d'Estreaux, by whom she was supported, she darted into her father's arms with feverish eagerness; and, clasping him with all the strength of which her emaciated frame was capable, clung round his neck without obtaining the relief of a word or a tear. Panting almost to suffocation, she at length drew back, as if to examine his altered figure; and at the same time disclosed to him all the changes of her own. He now saw that the ruby lip was pale; the sparkling eyes, brightened by youth and happiness, were dim; a hectic flush wavered upon her cheek, and her once-playful countenance seemed fixed in a hopeless dejection which *nothing* could illuminate! In a moment his brain became a chaos; and, while he continued to eye her with a tearless and rooted gaze, his wandering imagination suddenly transformed her into the child of fancy whose story he had been ruminating. To the indescribable hor-

ror

ror of the Marchioness, shrugging his shoulders with an expression strongly cynical, and turning away from her, he exclaimed, "Poor forlorn Ethel!" His boys, who stood aloof, fearfully surveying him, were not old enough to comprehend at once the cause of the Marchioness's appalled countenance; but Adonia felt it too fully: it struck at her heart; the pale lip changed to blue, and she fainted away. De Bellefonde instantly recollected himself, and strove to rally his thoughts; while the Marchioness, struggling with her own feelings, yet ever firm and self-collected, exhorted him to composure, and strove to revive his daughter. In both she was unsuccessful; and, finding that the sight of Adonia's situation, of which the poor father became every moment more impatient, only increased his agitation, she raised the inanimate in her arms, and with the assistance of a servant conveyed her to a distant apartment. Here, by

proper applications, the feeble sufferer was in some measure recovered; but the Marchioness, fearful of the consequences of a second similar shock, would not listen to her entreaties for another interview at this time; but, deceiving her with an assurance that she could obtain the liberty of a repetition of their visit through the same means which had already gained them admission, she prevailed upon her to go home under the care of her old governess; and returned alone to De Bellefonde. The boys had been left with him; and the Marchioness hoped, that, having leisure to remark *their* healthful and improving forms, his grief for Adonia would be diverted, if not softened. Alas! his grief was now past consolation! It had shaded the lights of reason, though not quite extinguished them; and the wretched De Bellefonde, hurrying from one distracting image of misery to another in which he fancied he saw his children plunged, had made a hasty compromise

compromise with conscience and reflection, and determined—*to die!* His eldest son had innocently at his request put into his hands the instrument to effect his purpose; and he was gazing over his children, *for the last time!* when the Marchioness's return startled and interrupted him, and for a while delayed the work of death. Her entrance gave a new turn to his ideas; and, catching her arm, while his countenance softened into the most imploring supplication, he whispered, "Will you be a mother to my children? Will you promise that Adonia shall never leave your sight?—never, I mean, be exposed to the treacherous addresses of the Comte de l'Avignon? Will you dry her tears, and restore the bloom to her faded countenance?" "Trust me, my ever-valued friend," replied the Marchioness, "whatever can be done to restore the dear drooping sufferer, I will most zealously perform. Your children can never want protection, nor the fostering of the ten-

derest

derest parental regard, while the Marquis and I are in being. Our own offspring could not be dearer to us." "But," said De Bellefonde, again wandering and speaking rapidly, "what security will you give me for this? Mankind are all treacherous alike. Adonia must be carefully and tenderly watched over; and I must be certain that she will be so, or I shall not die in peace. Friends, it seems, may prove false; and you know—

Insult is worse to hide than sorrow!
Worse than *her* fate who for to-morrow
No shelter knows!
And when a hand, beloved, throws
The jagged arrow, those
Who brav't must more than mortal firmness borrow,
Or sink beneath their woes."

The Marchioness, affrighted, but still possessing her usual presence of mind, saw that his disorder increased, and that it would be safer to seem to acquiesce in these strange and wild chimeras, than to attempt combating them by argument. She

She therefore requested to know what surety he required; and that she would undoubtedly comply with every instruction he might give her respecting his children. "You must swear then," said De Bellefonde, "solemnly swear, that no consideration on earth shall induce you to forsake them! Even *you* I dare not trust without an oath!" "I swear!" said the Marchioness, hoping to satisfy him by a ready compliance; and may heaven forsake me when I forsake your children!" "Now, Antonia," replied he, "I am contented. Heaven bless you, my excellent cousin! My boys, farewell! You may now leave me!"—The Marchioness hesitated; a strong suspicion of his design instantly rushed upon her mind.—"You are unkind, Theodore," said she, "to be the first to bid us depart. We may at least remain till we are summoned away. Besides, you have not embraced your sons; you have given them no instructions which may impress upon their

young

young minds the last adieus of a parent."
"You would have me weep over them?" said he gloomingly. "The world will tell them that it was *their father* who ruined them, whose misconduct blasted their early prospects; and ought I to teach them to lament me? No! I wish not to soften their natures. Poor innocents! *who* would destroy the momentary sunshine of childhood by anticipating the season of sorrow? Rather teach them to rejoice when I am gone!" Then, violently wringing her hands "For pity's sake, my dear Marchioness, try to recover Adonia! Oh! let me not be fatal to the child, as I was to the sainted mother!" He continued talking for some time, but in a wild and hurrying manner, and became more and more impatient of the Marchioness's stay, which he still possessed reason enough to be conscious might impede the perpetration of his design. He soon confirmed her former suspicion by the eager,

eager, and even rude, reiterations of his wish that she would leave him.—No person was at hand; but she still hoped that his intentions were not so immediate but that she might have time to alarm the officers who were in waiting without; and she hastily withdrew for that purpose, leading away his sons, whom she thought it would be imprudent to leave alone with him. The instant she turned away from him,—the very moment her eyes were withdrawn,—the fatal knife, which Theodore had unconsciously given him, was ready for its destined office; and the lost infatuated De Bellefonde stabbed himself to the heart!—The Marchioness's absence was scarcely of a minute's duration; yet at her return she found him weltering in his blood, without sense or motion.—She was immediately hurried away, and the scene closed upon the unfortunate De Bellefonde!—a man formed

formed by nature with the rarest endowments of virtue and intellect; yet, betrayed by the prolonged dominion of false refinements and overstrained feelings, he had now earned the opprobrium of suicide, and, in the eyes of the world, sunk to a level with the abject and the guilty.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

I will give a shipwrecked man a plank; a lodging to a stranger; a piece of money to him who has it not; I will dry up the tears of my friend, but I will not weep with him.

SENECA.

THE Marchioness d'Estreaux carried De Bellefonde's orphaned daughter to try the air of Montpelier, which the physicians who attended her advised as a last recourse.—Her disorder was now a confirmed and rapid consumption, which, though accelerated by anguish of mind, was chiefly attributed to the uncommon rapidity of her growth, too enervating for a con-

a constitution of such delicacy to provide against. The frequency of this species of decline, and the many instances of its being overcome by proper precautions, rendered the Marchioness still sanguine in her hope of restoring this beloved object, who, always dear to her, was now become doubly interesting from the solemn and affecting manner in which she had been committed to her trust, and the awful event which had ensued. But Adonia herself, uncomplaining and resigned, looked with an equal eye on life and death, as far as they only regarded her own feelings. She was too young, too largely gifted by nature with that mental temperament which disposes its possessor to reap the blessings of life, and make the best of its disquiets, to turn away disgusted from the present scene:—but she had undergone trials the most distressing to a sensible heart; she was daily struggling under sickness and debility; she had lost her last parent! and, in such circumstances,

 life

life, could not be an object of much desire, while the innocence of her heart rendered her a stranger to all alarm respecting the issue of her fate.—Her only concern was to lessen the anxiety of the Marchioness, whose maternal tenderness and watchful solicitude, so different from the usual cold and distant affability of her manners, had equally engaged her most fervent gratitude and love.—"How unjustly used I to judge this admirable woman!" she would say to herself. "Because I saw her unmoved and self-collected under the pressure of exigencies which would have discouraged common minds, I censured her as stoical or masculine; and, because she bore no part in the trifling distresses and weak murmurings excited by those frequent and unimportant afflictions on which other women are forward to display their sensibility, I considered her inaccessible to all the softer emotions. Haughty and reserved in her general carriage, I lamented as a weakness

weakness that pride which I now find springs less from hereditary pretensions than a conscious elevation of mind, which naturally impels her to keep aloof from insignificant society, and the influence of uninteresting objects. This woman, whom I have seen listening unmoved to a tale of fictitious distress, which convulsed the bosom of every other auditor; whom I have seen smile contemptuously on the most extravagant expressions of self-created woe; can sympathize in every throb of real anguish; can devote her whole time and thoughts to console the mental affliction, and allay the bodily sufferings, of a friendless orphan, whose tears would flow unheeded by the rest of the world, and from whom she can expect no other return than powerless gratitude and unavailing love."

Engaged in such reflections as these, Adonia glowed towards her with an enthusiastic regard; rendered still more

affecting by the consideration that this amiable woman was now her only protector; and, in such moments, she would feel the love of life revive within her, from an ardent wish that she might have time to afford this excellent friend the satisfaction of thinking that *her* cares had snatched her from the grave;—that she might yet endeavour to repay obligations which her grateful heart rated at the price of the utmost services a long life could bestow. The Marquis d'Estreaux, who remained in Paris on account of the agitated state of political affairs, which made it proper for all faithful adherents to the interests of the King to remain near his person at this time, had acceded to his wife's determination of accompanying Adonia to Languedoc, less from motives of humanity than from the influence her superior virtues had given her over him. Though he saw the propriety of her taking this journey, he felt little interest in the object of it; and he had yielded, like other weak

weak and despotic men, after much cavilling and objection, because he could produce no reason against it which would overcome the steady and dignified resolution of her by whom it was supported. But he had parted from his wife in anger; and, though Adonia was unacquainted with the circumstances attending this parting, she knew enough of the Marquis's sentiments towards herself, as well as the general disposition of his mind, to be sensible that the Marchioness's absence could not but be displeasing to him. While this consideration heightened Adonia's gratitude towards her maternal friend, it likewise added to her solicitude to shorten the period of the Marchioness's voluntary exile from her family, by making the best use of the advantages which her residence in the salubrious climate of Montpelier was expected to afford. She endeavoured, therefore, as much as possible, to wean her thoughts from the contemplation of the heavy loss she had sustained.

The manner of her father's death had been cautiously withheld from her; and she strove, by every effort of Christian fortitude, to consider this event, which had proved so fatal to her own happiness, as the certain insurance of his. She submitted, even with cheerful alacrity, to the prescriptions of the physician who attended her; and bore all her bodily sufferings with a determined sweetness and patience, which, while they kept her mind free from that irritation so destructive and common in such cases, removed one of the greatest obstacles to her recovery, and disposed her to receive all the aid that her constitution was capable of deriving from the salutary influence of her situation.—Notwithstanding the shock she had so recently received, and the increased anguish which the contemplation of it was calculated to produce, (for her father's death had been purposely communicated at a time when bodily, as well as mental, langour rendered her incapable of feeling the

the full extent of her misfortune,) and that, with increasing strength the powers of feeling were renewed; notwithstanding the cheerless prospects presented by the world to her view, in which she could but count one friend who with the wish had likewise the ability to serve her; the energy of her mind so far overcame the feebleness of her body and the trembling sensibility of her heart, that, in less than a month from their arrival at Montpelier, health again began to revisit her faded cheek, and she even wore the placid aspect of content and subdued anguish.—The Marchioness, who saw that this calm was but an effort of temporary magnanimity, of the same nature as that which had sometimes upheld her unfortunate father, nevertheless rejoiced in its effects, and contributed to encourage her to continue it till her convalescence should be more confirmed; though she knew that the tide of feeling must some time or other break forth with accumulated

violence from this forced obstruction.—She kept her, as much as possible, in action both of body and mind; either by reading aloud to her the works of some useful and entertaining author, or by leading her abroad, to wander as fancy directed among the beautiful scenes of Languedoc, where every breath inhales health, and every *coup-d'œil* inspires cheerfulness. As her patient's strength increased, so as to admit of extending these rambles, the Marchioness undertook to add to their utility by instructing her in the study of botany, the regular and infinite gradation of the vegetable tribes, and the nature and scientific arrangement of the plants which they gathered in their walks. This amusement Adonia cultivated with avidity.—She was an enthusiastic admirer of nature in all her views, and ever thirsting after farther acquaintance with her laws. They had one day extended their walk much beyond its customary limit: Adonia was fatigued, but

but too much occupied to complain. "I have heard it ridiculed," said she, addressing the Marchioness, "as vain and futile for women to treasure up stores of information that have no reference to their own peculiar walk in life: but surely it is better to be so employed than to suffer the mind either to remain wholly inactive, or to wander long amid the fields of imagination; whither, for want of being better directed, it seems to me that the female intellect is too ready at all times to resort."

"Your observation is truly just," replied the Marchioness. "Excluded by custom and early education from engaging in the pursuits of science, and too timid to step forward of themselves to throw open the gates of knowledge, which seem purposely barred against them, women of sensibility and fancy often employ the season of their youth in romantic dreamings; out of which they are at length forcibly and painfully awakened, unfitted to act their parts in more advanced life with dignity

or consistency, or for the enjoyment of any solid or real satisfaction, from having so long been accustomed to the exaggerated representations of fancy, and the desultory occupations of a mind which has no fixed object.—On the other hand, women, who have naturally no sensibility to lead them astray, and none of that energy of mind which impels the former class rather to range the wilds of fancy than rest contented in the narrow sphere of information to which their education confines them, seize with avidity the trifles of the day, and become vain, censorious, dissipated, and trifling. Women have no reason to desire, nor would they find occasion to employ, the genius of a Hobbes or a Des Cartes; but every mind ought to be constantly directed to some intellectual acquirement, proportioned to its natural vigour.; and, though every woman is not capable of becoming a philosopher, there are none who may not be rendered happier and better by culling the

the flowers which philosophy has already gathered: what I have observed is, however, but a general view of the influence of female education: there are, no doubt, some who are wise enough to pursue other plans, which ripen into better fruits; but such instances are rare.—Error, long nursed, becomes the darling of its parents; and they are not easily prevailed upon to part with it, even when its nature is known, and its consequences experienced. I have divided women in general into two classes; and, when a new character is introduced to me which does not decisively diverge from both, I set about considering to which of them the poor ill-nursed bantling belongs. To the one I give my pity; to the other my contempt; though, perhaps, pity is equally due to both; for it is education, not choice, which has placed them where they are." "You have been very severe upon poor education," said Adonia smiling; "and now, will you inform me, in what rank you are disposed

to class the young lady who has just passed us? She is the same whom we met yesterday in these woods.—I feel strongly induced to think that *her* education has not been of the common sort: her face strangely interests me: she resembles some one whom I ought to know; and I think I never saw a more intelligent countenance." "Yours is at least a liberal prejudgement," said the Marchioness; "and I must own the young lady displays a something, independent of her beauty, which would prepossess one in her favour: but I have long ceased to judge from the information of a fine countenance. There are some coquets who look as intelligent as angels, and as heavenly minded, at the very moment when their highest desire is personal admiration, and their most serious thoughts employed in directing the proper play of a pair of fine eyes.—Mademoiselle d'Argneau, for instance! *there* is the acmè of physiognomonical hypocrisy! How on earth, Adonia, can you

you forbear giving that girl a slap on the face, when she puts on one of her pensive thoughtful looks, as if she were making mortifying reflections on the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, herself the most striking monument of vanity in its whole circle!"

"Ah! my dear Marchioness," Adonia answered with hesitation, "you do not know her; indeed you do not! I cannot deny that she has many faults, but she has so much goodness of heart, such a warmth of attachment to her friends!" "A good heart, Adonia! She sometimes indeed *accidentally* betrays, by occasional sparks of benevolence, or momentary fits of contrition, that nature was partial to her at her birth, and that it is *her own fault* that she is not amiable. But what does it avail either her or you, that her heart was originally good, if it be now corrupted? Your own impulses of rectitude, ripened to action, are consolidated

solidated into system; you thence endeavour to persuade yourself that hers are of the same species, and will *in time* produce similar effects;—but when will that time arrive? Never! A mind governed alone by fashion, by thoughts perpetually whirling round the giddy vortex of dissipation, are fascinated and arrested there; and, though they may occasionally, like the eddyings of water, send forth a bubble, or a curling froth upon the surface, *she* who has once voluntarily, and with all *her* powers awake, yielded herself to such influence, will still be found to adhere to the same spot, and still revolve round the same alluring gulph, to the end of her existence; for custom, which reconciles us to indifferent things, rivets immoveably those that we prefer. There is a wide difference between the good heart that prompts to action, and the heart that only sets out occasionally on its journey in search of what is right, and turns back again when the road lies in

in a contrary direction from its wishes. Such hearts would be good, if they could reconcile vice with virtue, wrong with right; but the *wish* of doing right, without the wish of doing it *at all rates*, is but a sickly and abortive growth, which never will be found to influence the general conduct or character of its inconsistent possessor! Adonia, why are you still the friend of such a girl? With more peace could I see you the friend of the greatest fool on earth than of this accomplished eloquent deceiver, who loves you, while present, with passionate affection; but, when absent, forgets that such a being exists; or recollects you only as you may fill up the pause of idle conversation!"

Adonia, who, though she had long known the Marchioness's disapprobation of her intimacy with Mademoiselle d'Argneau, had never before heard her speak of it in such pointed terms, felt both wounded

wounded and astonished, although far from convinced of the justice of her censure; yet had she not a word to offer in reply. There was something, she at this moment thought, that differed from the Marchioness's usual kindness and consideration, in her thus attacking the character of *her* favorite companion. "Surely," thought she, "it is cruelty to disturb the confidence of one who has so few friends, and so many adversities to struggle with!" The melancholy reflection rushed upon her in spite of reason, and tears started in her eyes. The Marchioness saw her emotion, and was grieved to have excited it; she had been led away, by the energy of her own ideas, to forget the ardour and delicacy of a youthful attachment, and the trembling texture of Adonia's heart, which at this time hung suspended between agony and resignation; capable of preserving its equilibrium if untouched, but ready to shrink from the slightest collision; and she now

hastened

hastened to do away the painful impression which she had unintentionally made, by carrying her attention to another object.

"I had almost forgotten," said she, "to give you my opinion of the young lady whom you wanted me to classify. I have observed her for some time, and really think we should find her acquaintance an agreeable acquisition in our retirement. She is very constant in her attendance upon her sick mother, who, as I was to-day informed, is the widow of an English gentleman of the name of Fitzwilliam." "Fitzwilliam!" exclaimed Adonia, her heart beating quicker, and her whole frame agitated by strong emotion:—"the name agitates me, and yet I dare not tell you why!—I was once inadvertently told," continued she hesitatingly, "that I had an aunt of that name in England.—I was forbidden to inquire farther." Here the recollection that it was her father

father who had betrayed this discovery to her,—he who was now mouldering in the grave!—joined to a quick apprehension of some painful mystery which must have occasioned his subsequent caution, and that that mystery concerned her mother, of whose history she knew little more than her having been unfortunate, overwhelmed her with unutterable feeling, and she seated herself on the grass, pale and breathless. The Marchioness, who had lately been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the lamented De Bellefonde's unfortunate connection with Angelica Conway, and who knew well enough why the name of Fitzwilliam should awaken painful reflections in the bosom of Adonia, as it had made considerable noise during her father's trial, (though the particulars of that charge against him, with which it was involved, had been carefully withheld from her,) was now doubly shocked to find that, in striving to heal one wound, she had inadvertantly

advertantly touched upon another. Affecting, however, to appear unconscious of the nature of her feelings, she calmly seated herself by her; and with a determined air reproved her for not sooner having expressed her fatigue; entreating her to calm her thoughts, and endeavour not to injure herself farther by such childish chimeras.—"Even supposing the young lady who passed us to be a relation of yours," she said, "surely, my love, the idea need not flutter you; for the connection is probably very remote:" Adonia drew from her bosom the picture of her mother, to which fancy at that moment traced a faint resemblance in the features of Miss Fitzwilliam. She looked earnestly upon it, and, bursting into an agony of tears, threw her arms round the Marchioness's neck, overcome by a thousand recollections and apprehensions which her heart could not repress; then, rising hastily from the ground, "Let us go home, my dearest madame," said she;

"I feel

"I feel faint and exhausted.—Will you forgive this involuntary exposure of my weakness? It shall in future be my study to prevent it." They had left their carriage at the entrance of the wood; and, having some distance to walk ere they could reach it, the Marchioness advised Adonia to remain where she was, while she herself proceeded in quest of the servants. But this Adonia strongly opposed from the idea of giving trouble. They walked slowly, and almost in profound silence, till they came within sight of the place where they had left their attendants. As they reached a narrow gate which divided them from the lane where the carriage stood, the young stranger appeared again, attended by two servants. She was walking quick, apparently out of breath and much agitated.—She stopped, hesitating, as she came up with them; and, seeming as if she read encouragement in the Marchioness's looks, she tremulously accosted her, and said in a

foreign

foreign accent, which her agitation rendered doubly interesting, "I am not altogether a stranger to the Marchioness d'Estreaux's benevolence.—That benevolence will plead my excuse for an intrusion which I myself hardly know how to apologize for or to explain. I have just received intelligence that my mother, who lodges near you, has been taken dangerously ill in my absence, in consequence of some dreadful news from Paris. I am faint and out of breath from a long walk, and I tremble to think how much longer it may be ere I can reach her.—I know not how to prefer my petition, there is something so odd in a stranger making such a request." As she said this, the tears, which she long had been struggling to repress, started from her eyes, and her cheeks again became suffused with blushes. She stopped, covering her face with her hands, and vainly striving to smile at her own imbecility. "I understand your request, my dear madame," said the Marchioness

chioness with a look of encouraging sympathy: "my carriage shall immediately attend you; and I trust you will find the sick lady better than you anticipate. Let us not waste time, however, in compliment; believe me you are truly welcome!" So saying, she beckoned the coachman to draw up. "But you will accompany me, madame?" said Miss Fitzwilliam: "I saw that you were going home, or, urgent as is my anxiety, I could not have had the presumption to think of requesting your assistance."—"Call it not presumption," the Marchioness replied; "my young companion is fatigued and fluttered; she could not bear to go so fast as it is necessary you should do; but we shall neither of us be the worse for remaining here till the carriage can return for us. Come, step into it; I am peremptory!" "No! my dear madame," replied the young stranger, with an expression of strong native feeling; "this young lady must not be left here, ill as I see

see she is:" and she fixed her eyes on Adonia's pale and melancholy countenance. A faint blush spread itself over Adonia's cheek, as she caught the sympathetic glance of the fair stranger; and, summoning up a degree of resolution which her apprehensions had for some moments deprived her of, she entreated her to relate the purport of the dreadful news from Paris which she had mentioned as having lately arrived. The stranger hesitated, and a delicate flush overspread her fair cheeks, while she glanced her expressive dark eyes upon Adonia's mourning habit. "Pardon me!" said she, with a sweet expression of innocent supplication; "indeed I meant not to wound. Though the tidings I spoke of are not very recent, the event is, however, one to which I fear you are no stranger." Then, turning to the Marchioness, "Indeed, madame, I cannot accept your carriage now. Mademoiselle de Rosier, alas! needs more assistance than I do. I am

quite shocked to think of my own heedlessness, in having called your attention from an object so infinitely more interesting. How weak and selfish have I appeared! Another time I will endeavour to make my apology, and express my gratitude for your prompt and considerate kindness.—God bless you, my dear madame! There are few such benevolent souls as yours!" Another, and a deeper, blush succeeded this involuntary expression of the admiration she felt; then, without waiting for a reply, she bounded away from them with the airy figure and elastic step of a wood-nymph, and, beckoning her servants to follow, was out of sight in an instant. "O my dear father, the tidings she spoke of alluded to you!" cried Adonia, bursting into tears, and throwing herself upon the bosom of her maternal friend.

During their ride homewards, the Marchioness, however, made no comment upon

upon this singular rencontre. She saw that the young stranger, who had greatly interested herself, had also made a deep impression on Adonia; but she wished to be farther informed respecting her family and connections, before she ventured upon a subject that might perhaps be intimately inwoven with the causes of her affliction, and therefore evaded all Adonia's questions, who was too feeble to repeat them. For the first time since her arrival at Montpelier, Adonia's manner betrayed a rooted despondency of mind. During the remainder of the day she spoke little, the Marchioness's repeated efforts to engage her in indifferent conversation ending, on her part, either in confessed lassitude or tears; which, once released from their confinement, now burst upon her with resistless force whenever her thoughts glanced towards the subject of her hoarded anguish. Towards evening she became unusually feverish; and her kind protectress, judging it proper

that her physician should see her, who had of late been allowed to relax from his stated attendance, dispatched a note to request that he would call in upon them as if by accident; not wishing at present that Adonia should notice her solicitude, as she had observed that disorders like hers, equally bodily and mental, were often rather irritated than relieved by an ill-timed sympathy, which agonizes while it seems to soothe, and by pitying reminds how much we stand in need of consolation.

Adonia was exactly in that frame of mind in which even insult is less oppressive than tenderness. The incidents of the morning had touched upon a string whose trembling sensibility had been quelled by an artificial firmness and forced forgetfulness, neither of which were calculated to be long maintained. She had, during her father's trial, received from one of the Marchioness's servants, whom she privately questioned, a vague and equivocal

equivocal statement of the particulars of the charges brought against him; which, though far from making her mistress of the subject, had been sufficient to prove to her (already disposed to think him incapable even of error) that the fraud and injustice of others had been the sole instruments of his disgrace. With such a conviction, she wished not to inquire farther, even had she found those, who were better able to inform her circumstantially, willing to satisfy her painful curiosity; for to know all the particulars of injuries, which had cost her so dear, was but to heap fuel on grief already insupportable: with steady resolution, therefore, she had determined to avoid all attenuations of her wretchedness which reason and prudence could enable her to prevent. But she had heard the name of Fitzwilliam, among others which were brought forward in enumerating the family-connections of her unfortunate mother; that she had an aunt of

that name; and, recollecting what had once dropped from her father in allusion to this connection, she felt a painful, an irresistible, curiosity respecting the young stranger, caused by the mystery which to her had always involved one of the authors of her being. Her curiosity was now accompanied by the most agonizing remembrances; and doubts which, at any other period but in her present querulous frame of mind, she would have rejected with disdain; doubts which implicated a father's probity and a mother's honor. The veil of prudence and self-command, which with a steady hand she had of late held over her misfortunes, was now again thrown aside by a combination of circumstances in themselves the most unimportant, but which had become dangerous by acting successively on a heart that could be kept in order by stratagem, though it was not capable of resisting the slightest violence.—"Why am I ignorant of the leading causes that have robbed

robbed me of my father?" inquired she: "why, oh! why is the secret of my birth still withheld from me, when it can no longer affect either of the unfortunate authors of my being? If this young lady is my relation, so near as the daughter of my mother's sister, why am I not known to her? why do all my conjectures and inquiries concerning this mysterious parent end unsatisfied?" As she framed this soliloquy a servant entered, and whispered the Marchioness, who immediately left the room with him. He had brought a verbal message from the physician, Monsieur d'Arblay, instead of a written answer to the Marchioness's note; importing that he was at present detained from obeying her summons by the necessity of his attendance on an English lady, who was supposed to be dying; but, that, if he might be allowed to send a deputy, Monsieur d'Orville, from Paris, an intimate friend of his, and of eminence in his profession, would wait

with pleasure upon her fair invalid.—"Monsieur d'Orville!" exclaimed the Marchioness; "when did he arrive here?" "I did not hear particularly, madame," the servant answered; "but I understand there are sad goings-on at Paris." "Where is Monsieur d'Orville to be found?" inquired the Marchioness eagerly.—"At Monsieur d'Arblay's," the man answered. "When I called there, I accidentally met him; and he, hearing that I was in your service, madame, inquired particularly after your health, and mademoiselle's; and, knowing how Monsieur d'Arblay was engaged, he offered to wait on you himself, after sending a message to him at Madame Fitzwilliam's house. Poor lady! she is in a piteous case;—but, as I was going to say, madame, Monsieur d'Orville seemed to me to want sadly to see your ladyship; though, as he had never waited upon your ladyship in Paris in the physician-way, he, may be, was puzzled to do it of his own accord; so I told

told him I was certain your ladyship would be glad to see him; for you was grievously troubled at not hearing any news from Paris for such a length of time; and upon that he shook his head, and said, there was sad doings there now indeed! But still he seemed doubtful on waiting on your ladyship till he had heard from yourself; and so I left him." "Go then instantly," replied the Marchioness, "and tell him that I request to see him as soon as convenient; and shall be particularly obliged by his visit." She had for some time been extremely uneasy at the unusual silence of the Marquis, which she forbore to remark to Adonia, lest it might create apprehensions for her brothers, who had been left with him at his house in Paris. Churlish as were his general manners, he reverenced his wife; and there subsisted between them a strong mutual affection, which even the violent ebullitions of his unhappy infirmity of temper had never been able to disturb. A vague report had that day reached her,

of some alarming tumult having happened in Paris among that body of the people who were adverse to the government; but of the event, and, indeed, the real nature of this disturbance, she was ignorant, while fears for her husband exaggerated its probable mischief. Though personally little acquainted with Monsieur d'Orville, she knew and highly respected his character; and, though he was of a profession which was then considered in Paris as excluding its members from the society of *les gens comme il faut*, the pride that was generally ascribed to her was not of a nature that withheld her from paying deference to real worth in whatever rank she discovered it. In her present uneasy state of mind, therefore, she looked up to D'Orville as a friend capable of soothing her uneasiness, if he could not bring relief.—He was not long in obeying her summons. Adonia was with her when he entered. Reclined on a sofa, she lay entranced in a kind of

of reverie, too uneasy and disturbed, to be called sleep, without being perfectly conscious. A general uneasiness pervaded her; and, though she seemed to slumber, it was but a mental torpor operating on the languor of her frame. The Marchioness motioned to him to speak low, and he began by giving her a relation of the late disturbance in Paris, whence he was just returned; having been recalled thither by some unexpected domestic business which had also occasioned his coming to Montpelier.—Having successfully quieted her fears for the Marquis, who, though he really had been active in this affair, was now apparently reinstated in tranquillity, and "he could assure her was well when he quitted Paris, three days previous to the present time," he next desired to know whether he could be of any immediate service to the young lady whom he understood was ill.—"We professional men," said he, "seldom venture to interfere with one another;

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and I would hope that my friend D'Arblay will soon be relieved from the painful office which at present detains him from attending his fair patient. But, if I may be introduced to her as a friend, I will as such give her my best advice.—Yet," continued he, smiling, "though I deny all design to supersede Monsieur d'Arblay by these my offered services, I am not wholly free from the charge of interested motives in my wish to be introduced to Mademoiselle de Rosier. I have a young patient with me here, whose health, (of mind at least,) if I am not much deceived, depends greatly on my favourable report of hers; and, for his sake, I am doubly interested in knowing the real state of mademoiselle's health." Observing that Adonia still appeared to slumber,—"And who is there here," said the Marchioness, "so much concerned for my poor Adonia?" "You will shudder at his name, madame," replied D'Orville, "if you unite it in your memory with that of his late protector; but

but I must bespeak your favour for him.—Though the *élève* of the Comte de l'Avignon, he is, believe me, worthy of your esteem." "Do you mean Monsieur St. Loudon?" said the Marchioness. "Is he at Montpelier?"—"Yes, madame," replied Monsieur d'Orville; "and he is now my charge. A poor isolated being like me, cut off from the endearments of a family, and left alone in an ungenial world, will find solace in cherishing a plant that takes kindly to him, whether it promise good or evil fruit! But St. Loudon would do honor to the protection of the most prosperous!" "I am glad to hear you speak favourably of this young man," the Marchioness replied with coldness and hesitation: "I had heard that he was idle and dissipated; and, indeed, his connection with the Comte de l'Avignon, whatever may be his own deserts, cannot but place him in an equivocal point of view.—But Adonia awakes!" "We will not talk of Monsieur St. Loudon now," continued she, whispering:—"she is easily fluttered, and the

the mention of any name connected with her late misfortunes would be likely to agitate her at present."—Then leading him to the other end of the room, where Adonia lay,—"Here is a medical gentleman, my love, whom I wish to introduce to you; he has observed that you look feverish and unwell; and, though I assured him you are convalescent, he seems so anxious to have you for a patient, that I have consented once more to place you on the invalid-list, merely to indulge him. Monsieur d'Orville is so good as to bring me comfortable news from home, and I must insist upon your giving him your best welcome, for I intend *henceforth* to place him on my list of friends." Adonia extended her hand to him with a sweet but feeble smile: "Your friendship for Monsieur d'Orville," said she, "insures mine;—but, indeed, he must not begin our acquaintance with evil auguries. Believe me, I am well comparatively, and I am resolved to *think*

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the best I can of myself." "If Mademoiselle de Rosier does not think highly of herself, I know not in whom vanity would be pardonable," said D'Orville. "But, my dear young lady," continued he, smiling, "there are two sorts of good people in this world;—those who *look* to advantage, and those who only *act* well.—Now I must insist that you do not belong to the good *lookers*, and therefore I would advise with you on the means of uniting both.—Let me feel your pulse." He then prescribed for her a simple composing draught; and assuring the Marchioness that a slight nervous irritation, probably caused by over fatigue alone, was her only complaint, he took his leave, having first promised to wait upon them on the following day.

CHAP

CHAP. XXIII.

MONSIEUR d'Orville was hardly gone, when a note was delivered to the Marchioness from Miss Fitzwilliam; which, having retired to read, she found the contents as follow:—

"There is no time for compliment or apology, or I should have doubly to apologize to the Marchioness d'Estreaux. My mother, alas! is in a state which distracts my thoughts. She has recently discovered that the young lady under your protection is the daughter of her unfortunate

tunate sister, (the late Angelica Conway;) and, pressed by the melancholy idea that she has not long to live, it is her earnest request that she may be permitted to embrace her before——Ah! madame, I cannot bear to name an event which will render me so wretched and desolate! I fear my amiable cousin is too ill to hazard coming to us. But, if it were possible,—if you could trust her, but for a moment, with us,—my mother's latest wishes would bless you!—You know not what an obligation you would confer upon her agonized daughter!

JOHANNA FITZWILLIAM."

The Marchioness could not deliberate on a request of such affecting urgency: she considered the claims of Mrs. Fitzwilliam too authoritative to be superseded at such an awful moment; and she immediately returned to Adonia, to prepare her for the unexpected meeting, though not without many uneasy apprehensions of its probable

probable effects upon her too-susceptible mind. With caution and delicacy she gave her a summary narrative of as much of her mother's life as was necessary to elucidate her present errand; giving her apostacy the colour of reason and conviction; and persuading Adonia, who was herself a Protestant, to believe that she had acted, in taking the step which led the way to her union with De Bellefonde, from the strongest motives of religion and conscience.—Adonia listened with eager attention; a glow of triumph lighted up her countenance as the Marchioness made this declaration, which sufficiently evinced what had been the nature of her distracting conjectures.—"My mother was then worthy of a daughter's respect! my adored father had no other cause for the secrecy I have so often wondered at than what was dictated by political necessity! How my heart lightens at the thought!" A flood of tears, made up of rapture and regret, here relieved her overcharged bosom,

bosom, so strongly does the love of honor illuminate the generous youthful mind, even amid the struggles of the most various affliction. "O my dearest Marchioness!" cried she, as soon as she could recover the use of speech, "what a delightful sensation does it afford me, to know that I have no cause to reproach the authors of my being! to know that no errors, disgraceful to honor, caused that mystery which has tormented me with such distracting doubts! I am not insensible to the tenderness which induced you, my guardian-angel, to defer a communication so interesting, so agitating; but, if you knew what uneasy apprehensions have this day beset me,—doubts which never occurred to me before"——Again tears impeded her utterance: "Why was I so ungrateful, so unjust, as even for a moment to glance a doubt on my father's integrity! Dear sainted victim! was there an action of his whole life, the motives of which might not have borne

borne the scrutiny of a congregated world? Oh! never, never!" cried she, clasping her hands and looking upwards. "The God who judges the heart, and not the conduct, has requited thy earthly troubles, thou amiable parent! His generous bosom is no longer goaded by ingratitude,—his upright nature no longer shocked by the perfidies of mankind: why then should I lament him!" A glow of exultation suffused her animated cheeks as she spoke, and the Marchioness fondly pressed her to her bosom:—"No, Adonia! he ought not to be an object of regret.—Emulate his virtues; be great, energetic, and magnanimous, like him; but shun his destructive refinement of feeling!—There is no misfortune which our own determined resolution may not lessen the sense of; no evil so trifling that imagination cannot convert into momentous suffering." The carriage had just been announced; and Adonia, hardly submitting to the precautions which the Marchioness

chioness judged necessary, of wrapping her up warmly, and making her swallow some cordial drops, and though trembling with the anticipation of a meeting so interesting, hastened impatiently to embrace her newly-found aunt, accompanied by her kind friend, who would not suffer her alone to encounter a scene which was likely to prove deeply affecting.

As the carriage stopped at Mrs. Fitz-william's lodgings, Adonia, all agitated as she was by the thought of being for the first time introduced to the relations of her interesting and unfortunate mother, could not forbear an exclamation of surprise and pleasure, as by the light of the flambeaux she beheld St. Loudon on the steps before the door, who stopped delighted, yet startled, as he caught her eye. He flew to hand her out; but the momentary glow of pleasure which lighted up his features was instantly supplanted by an expression of the deepest concern when he remarked her

her pale and altered countenance, and felt her hand tremble within his as he assisted her to alight. He had been employed in carrying a confidential message from D'Orville to his friend D'Arblay, and had just heard of Adonia's intended visit to the dying lady above; though, acquainted as he was with the cause of her being at Montpelier, he was not prepared for the ravages which sickness had committed on her once-beautiful form. "Good heaven!" he exclaimed, unable to repress his emotion, "is it indeed Mademoiselle de Rosier whom I see? Is it thus that the loveliest and the best are requited?" "Indeed, Monsieur St. Loudon," said Adonia, faint and out of breath, "you give one a discouraging reception; but I assure you I rejoice to see *you* once more!" "That *once more!*" said the Marchioness, "infers some supposed impossibility: and pray, my dear, what reason had you to make a doubt of seeing this gentleman again, while

while he and you continue inhabitants of the same world?" "I know not," said Adonia confusedly, "why I used the expression; but, indeed, I might, not without reason, have doubted of ever seeing any of my Parisian friends again." "Poh! my love," said the Marchioness, "do not think of the past." "No?" asked Adonia, faintly smiling; "then I must be unconscious of the present too!" Here, curtsying slightly to St. Loudon, the Marchioness motioned to Adonia to follow her, and then entered the house. "Good night, Monsieur St. Loudon!" said Adonia hesitating: "perhaps we may see you again;—perhaps to-morrow?" "I will consider of it," St. Loudon replied;—"whether I dare trust myself,—whether, I mean, I may venture to intrude, where I have reason to doubt a welcome.—I can perceive that the Marchioness is prejudiced against me," continued he hurryingly; "and, to own the truth, I cannot but mistrust *myself*." So

saying,

saying, he bowed with forced ceremony, and left Adonia, who with a beating heart entered the saloon.—Miss Fitzwilliam, who had been anxiously watching for the end of their conference, flew to meet her, and embraced her with a torrent of tears.—Adonia, whose thoughts were now divided by the image of St. Loudon,—St. Loudon distant and embarrassed, so different from the warm and artless welcome which *her* heart had given him,—felt herself more than ever a coward at the approaching meeting with her aunt. It was in vain that the Marchioness strove to reassure her. What was before the object of her most impatient desire seemed now an impossibility: and pale, trembling, and speechless, she hung upon her cousin's neck like a victim shrinking from approaching death.—The Marchioness knew that there are moments when the reasoning of others serves but to exasperate the tumults of the soul. She had seldom witnessed such paroxysms

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in Adonia; but she saw that at present she was in that state of mingled and unutterable emotion which the powers of words can neither soothe nor delineate; and she forbore to distress her farther with unavailing arguments of composure. Miss Fitzwilliam, scarcely less agitated, wandered over the features of her faded, but still lovely, cousin with looks of sympathetic inquiry; while anxiety to return to the bedside of her mother contended with her desire to solace Adonia. At length, by a hasty and energetic effort, such as peculiarly characterized all her actions where a sense of duty prompted to exertion, reason was triumphant; and Adonia, rising with precipitation, wiped away her tears, and begged to be conducted to her aunt. Miss Fitzwilliam took her hand, and, opening the door of an apartment adjoining, led them through this, which was but dimly lighted, to another, at the door of which she stopped; here, begging

Adonia to remain a moment, she left her to announce to her mother the arrival of her cousin. Mrs. Fitzwilliam had lost nothing of the steady and dignified composure which had distinguished her earlier character, by the long series of afflictions and bodily sufferings through which she had passed, since the period when, indignant at De Bellefonde's apparent disrespect to the memory of her beloved sister, she had quitted Paris with the determination of for ever renouncing the friendship of one whom she thought entitled to her contempt. She had, in the interval from that time, lost her husband and three promising children; she had struggled with many varieties of fortune, and drunk deep of the mingled cup of human calamity. She had now been some time possessed of a moderate but comfortable independency, on which she lived retired in the neighbourhood of a village in Hampshire; when the declining state of her health induced her, at the en-

treaties

treaties of her daughter, to try the effects of a warmer climate. She had reached Montpelier, exhausted in health, though not enervated in mind; and, by strict attention to the rules prescribed by her physician, she for a while seemed to have surmounted the lurking evil which preyed upon her constitution: but this favourable change was but a temporary deceit; and she was now to all appearance journeying fast towards the final period of her suffering life. Many circumstances had concurred, with her apparently well-grounded resentment against De Bellefonde, to prevent her renewing a personal intercourse with him or his family; and, though not ignorant of the leading events which had befallen him since they parted, she had almost lost the wish with the hope of ever again beholding the fair pledge of her sister's misfortune, over whose deserted infancy she had shed so many bitter tears. Her daughter, who knew the reviving pleasure

pleasure such intelligence would afford, had that morning learned, by the inquiries she had been led to make, that the interesting stranger whom she had met with the Marchioness d'Estreaux was the same orphan whose fate her mother had so often bewailed; and, as soon as her spirits were judged equal to the communication, she had imparted it to her.—The news diffused a gleam of long-absent delight over the bosom of the dying sufferer, who, amid the tears of her surrounding family, was calmly awaiting the last mortal stroke; sensible of no regret but what arose from the dread of leaving her daughter unprotected, and at such a distance from home. The soothing comfort, of embracing before she died the child of her darling Angelica, was farther heightened by the expectation of witnessing the commencement of a friendship between the two amiable cousins, which she fondly hoped might prove mutually advantageous through life. With such

such an expectation, her eagerness to see the fair orphan was redoubled; and, though she had all day been lingering in extreme bodily pain, the melancholy presage of approaching dissolution, she could not be prevailed upon to defer the meeting, so earnestly desired, on the slender hope of surviving another day; though Monsieur d'Arblay, zealous to preserve a life which he perceived to be of such importance, had warned her of the danger of precipitation, and anxiously urged her to delay what he judged could not but agitate and overcome her. Resolute and self-dependent in all her actions, she was not to be reasoned out of that which she judged right.—"I feel life wasting away within me," said she. "It is *possible* I might linger on a short while longer, by avoiding any unusual agitation of spirits; but a few days *must* extinguish the feeble lamp: and of what avail is the present time, if I do not use it to the best advantage?" With such sentiments she

had prepared to meet her niece. In such a frame of mind she now received her. But the sight of one who recalled all the circumstances of that most distressing period of her life, when her heart, new to misfortune, had for the first time experienced the anguish of witnessing the agonizing death of one of its dearest objects; the many mournful images that were linked on the same chain, which, all closely united in the storehouse of memory, could not severally be touched without disturbing the whole; the plaintive look, the emaciated form, of Adonia, who, as she hung over her bed in speechless emotion, seemed like some aerial being whose soul-piercing eye had already penetrated the dark recesses of the grave, and now solemnly discoursed of its mysterious secrets; all these combined to shake the firmness of her soul, and Mrs. Fitzwilliam lay some minutes wholly insensible, and to all appearance on the last verge of existence.

Restored

Restored at length to recollection, and to the weeping group who surrounded her, she again exerted herself to employ the feeble remnant of life in conversing with the two objects now most interesting to her; and, as the Marchioness d'Estreaux, who had not yet been admitted to her apartment, claimed a right, both from her consanguinity and maternal affection for her niece, to share a part in her last attentions, she requested that she might be brought in. With this message Monsieur d'Arblay left her, who had hitherto remained a spectator of the affecting scene; and, when the Marchioness entered, she waved to her attendants to withdraw. The Marchioness had but once seen her before, on the day when, sparkling in youth and loveliness, she had given her hand to the now-torpid Fitzwilliam, at the house of De Bellefonde's father. Eighteen years, which seemed like the review of yesterday, had elapsed since that period. The father, the son, who

were present at this ceremony, and the then-happy bridegroom, were now all swept away by death! "You appear affected with the change which you seem to perceive in me, my dear madame," said Mrs. Fitzwilliam, addressing her, when their first salutions were ended. "Unacquainted with the gradations through which I have passed to reach my present exhausted state, you view only what I *was* when we last met contrasted with what I now *am.* Though the same number of years have rolled over each of us since that period, you cannot account for the ravages of time on *me*, and wonder to see life thus prematurely withered. Your surprise is natural, though it can hardly be called reasonable; for what appears to you but an inconsiderable speck of time, viewed as a part of *my life*, is no doubt to *yours* a space of importance, pregnant with the remembrance of many varieties, many prominent events, which mark its different stages. But you have indeed had the

the advantage of me in regard to those circumstances which clog the wheels of time. Sickness and misfortune have rendered mine a premature decay; yet the past, which *I* look back upon, seems to have been lengthened out to a miraculous extent. I am not one of those who are ready to quarrel with life the instant it frowns upon them; nor do I look back with murmuring on the portion of its evils which have been allotted to me; but I have tried it long enough to know that to some it is not a desirable possession; and I would have my friends believe that I am about to quit it without fear and without regret!" "But with sentiments so just, my dear madame," interrupted the Marchioness, observing the difficulty with which she spoke, and the violent emotions of her two weeping relatives, "you cannot but agree, that, while life is allowed us, it is our duty to cherish it to the utmost of our power. Let me intreat you not to exhaust yourself by

prolonging at present a conversation which cannot but be hurtful to you. The very action of speaking enfeebles your body; and surely the mind, which supplies that exertion, must be doubly injured by it! Repose yourself a while, my dear madame. After the hurry of spirits this meeting has occasioned, rest is absolutely necessary; and to-morrow you will find yourself much better able to converse with your friends." Mrs. Fitzwilliam shook her head: "To-morrow, my good madame, cannot be counted upon in my languishing state; but I will be brief. My only remaning anxiety in this world is for my daughter. My charming niece is too well protected to cause any solicitude on her account. My Johanna, I trust, will inherit her mother's fortitude, and forbear yielding to useless lamentation for an event which is inevitable. But I would advise with them both in regard to pecuniary concerns; and flatter myself that you, my dear Marchioness,

chioness, will enforce my advice as you may hereafter find it eligible. Relying on the prudence and excellent principles of my daughter as sufficient for the direction of her conduct, I rather wish her to pass her minority in the same retirement where we have lately lived, than, by residing with any of her father's friends, to render herself dependent on the caprices of others. Her grandfather in England is dead, and her other relations have never shewn that friendship for her mother which can entitle her to expect much kindness from any of them towards herself. She will inherit the small estate that I purchased in Hampshire, which will enable her to support the same style of life she has for some years been accustomed to; inferior indeed to the expectations I once had for her, but sufficient to preserve her in a comfortable independence. The old governess, my excellent friend, who has adhered to me in all the changes of my life,

will, I hope, continue to live with her there; and I have in my will directed her guardian to that effect; but, as her destination must for some time depend upon their honor and deference to my wishes, and as none of the three gentlemen, whom I have nominated the trustees of her little inheritance, have any other interest in her than what may arise from the friendship they professed for her mother; as, in short, she has not one near relation in England sufficiently solicitous about her to repair the loss which she will soon sustain, I am doubly desirous that she should cultivate the acquaintance of her amiable cousin; and trust that the two beloved orphans, united under the pressure of a similar misfortune, will find mutual solace in cementing the bonds of kindred by those of affection. I would therefore wish Adonia de Rosier, should she ever need a home, (and who can answer for the events of this mutable life?) to consider Johanna Fitzwilliam's

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as always open to receive her; and I shall bequeath to her the three-thousand pounds which I placed in the English funds, intended as a portion for my second daughter, had she lived to use it; the yearly interest of which she will receive through my agents in London, Messrs. Brookley and Co. one of whom is likewise my daughter's acting guardian.—And now, my dear children, let me call your attention to a circumstance, which, as it concerns the noble family to which you are both equally allied, and may (though at present involved in mystery) prove of the last consequence to one of its descendents, I would have you consider of importance, and scrupulously adhere to the directions I am about to give you respecting it. Lord Stavordale, my cousin, and the lineal heir of the present Earl of Wallingford, your grand-uncle, was the only one of that family (after my marriage with Fitzwilliam) whoever treated me with the regard due to so near a relative.—The

The politics of Fitzwilliam's family differed from Lord Wallingford's; and on this account, as well as certain domestic feuds, I remained a stranger to all my father's relations, until accident made me acquainted with Lord Stavordale during my last visit to Paris, when I accompanied my husband on a secret and important embassy. Lord Stavordale was then in the prime of youth, and in the possession of every distinction of rank and fortune; but of a grave and melancholy turn of mind: and it was perhaps the disposition he found me in, somewhat similar to his own, which first interested him in one whom the rest of his family had always frowned upon. But in the dissensions which caused that alienation he had never borne a part. Some secret and domestic grief seemed to have extinguished all party animosity in him; and, though by nature a man of strong passions and turbulent emotions, (as he himself often with bitterness confessed to me,) I never

saw him engage either in the private quarrels or political controversies which perpetually convulsed and divided the other members of his extensive family.—He was not in friendship with any of them, yet he seemed scrupulously to avoid widening the breach; and, though he eagerly availed himself of a slight invitation from Fitzwilliam to travel with us on our journey back to England, and to our great surprise overtook us upon the road the morning after we had set out without him, (so anxious was he to give us his society,) he left us the instant we landed together at Dover; in order, we supposed, to shun the appearance of intimacy with persons so obnoxious to Lord Wallingford.—This, however, was but conjecture; and, though he long kept away from us, we were neither forgotten nor slighted by him. We retired to live in the neighbourhood of York, where Fitzwilliam inherited a large estate, left him by his aunt, Mrs. Selwyn; and near which I and my unfortunate sister

sister were educated. Here Lord Stavordale rejoined us. "I am come to take up my abode with you," said he as he entered; "an alien from happiness!—A wanderer like me can only expect to find comfort in the society of benevolent souls who can bear with his peculiarities."—We made no comment on the singularity of this address. The pleasure of our meeting was mutual, and he remained with us several months. When he left us, he requested Fitzwilliam would correspond with him, which we did during some years; but I saw him no more till a short while before his death. A consumption was his disorder, brought on, I believe, by the rooted dejection of his mind; for, though he kept his sorrows to himself, it was but too evident in his looks and manner that grief was preying upon his vitals.—Four years ago, he came to take his last farewell of me. Fitzwilliam was no more. You, Johanna, remember him then: he presented me with a fine picture of

of himself, and to my daughter he gave a locket, richly set with diamonds; in which, besides a lock of his own, was a small braid of infantine hair, of a light auburn colour.—"It is the hair of the person dearest to me in life!" said he: "it is the most valuable memento I could give you of my regard, as it is that which I would not have parted with *before* my death but to the daughter of my most valued friends." Johanna kissed it, and burst into tears at this melancholy presage of his dissolution. But how were all our emotions augmented, when, while he yet continued speaking, we saw the tide of life forsake his cheeks! His breath failed him, and he fell on the ground without sense or motion!—He had received a paralytic stroke; but, after some time, he revived for a few minutes to a sense of his situation. Though nearly speechless, he could hardly make me sensible of his request, when he desired me to bring him a small locked casket, which

which stood upon the table of the apartment where he slept.—I obeyed; but, when I returned to him, the malady had seized upon the organs of speech, and death seemed already to have begun his work. He appeared to labour under strong agitation of mind,—seemed struggling to unfold some burdensome secret,—but he had only power to articulate, after he had motioned to every one but myself to withdraw, "I have a son,—Lord Wallingford's heir! Keep this for him! Let no one else possess it till he claims it from you!" when, with one deep heavy groan, he expired. As I had never heard of his having a child by his wife, Lady Frances S. I judged that this son, whom his words declared legitimate, had been the fruit of a previous alliance unknown to his family, and probably obnoxious to them. Having no clue to guide me to him, I resolved to bury in profound silence this mysterious bequest, until his son, who I conjectured had received instructions

structions to this effect, should come in person to claim his right. But he has not yet appeared, nor have I been able to learn whether any of Lord Wallingford's family are apprised that such a person exits; my own suspicion however is, that they *do* know this circumstance, and wish to suppress it in favour of some other claimant to the heirship, *which* is entailed upon the lineal males.—Many incidents, too much lengthened to relate in my present narrative, strengthen this suspicion; and, as the casket most probably contains something elucidative of the young Lord Stavordale's claims of succession, let me charge you, my dear girls, to guard it with the strictest attention; and, if Earl Wallingford should die before the young man appears, endeavour to pursue such measures as may enable the friends of the latter to counteract any fraud which may be attempted to supersede him in his just rights, till he can be found to defend them himself.—The only friend

friend of Lord Stavordale's to whom I can direct you, (for he lived estranged from general society,) is Admiral Tracey, of Fort Mervan, in the Isle of Wight, (the father of a young lady now under my care, for whom I must bespeak the Marchioness's favor.) Should it be necessary, you may claim *his* assistance in this affair; or, should any thing happen to prevent your resigning your trust to the young man himself, let it next be deposited with this gentleman; who is a man of worth and probity, and was long intimate with and faithfully attached to my deceased friend."—Here Mrs. Fitzwilliam ceased speaking. Exhausted by the long exertion, she laid her head upon the pillow, and in a few minutes, contrary to the painful expectations of the group who surrounded her, a calm and refreshing sleep subduced her wearied senses:—but it was *her last sleep!*—Towards midnight she expired, without a groan, in a mild and insensible decay.

CHAP. XXIV.

'Tis heav'n each passion sends,
And diff'rent men directs to diff'rent ends:
Extremes in nature equal good produce;
Extremes in man concur to gen'ral use.

POPE.

THE Marchioness had prevailed upon Adonia to return home with her, as soon as she saw Mrs. Fitzwilliam composed to sleep.—She was indeed nearly as much exhausted in spirits as the enfeebled sufferer whom they left upon a death-bed; and her fever, irritated by the convulsions of her mind, increased before morning to an alarming degree. Early on the following

following day, a short note from Miss Fitzwilliam informed the Marchioness of her mother's death. Concealing it from Adonia, who was still in bed, she immediately went to comfort the amiable mourner; and to offer to her and her companion, Miss Tracey, the use of her house, till the last melancholy offices should be performed to the remains of the respected deceased.—Monsieur d'Arblay took upon himself the charge of conducting the funeral; and, by permission of the magistrates, the body was interred in a private burial-ground without the city, where the remains of several other Protestant strangers were deposited. Miss Fitzwilliam could not be prevailed upon to leave the house, which now contained only the sacred remains of her lamented mother, until this last duty was performed. She then availed herself of the Marchioness's offer, and with her friend, Miss Tracey, removed to her lodgings.—Adonia was by this time apprised of her aunt's death, and

and received her weeping cousin with silent composure. She was again reduced to that state in which earthly objects had almost ceased to affect her; that deep, yet calm, melancholy which succeeds the tumults of agitated feeling when the mind has passed its highest pitch of suffering, and sinks under lassitude and fatigue.—Miss Tracey, Johanna's friend, was a lively, thoughtless, common-place, character; one who, with a feeling heart and tolerable abilities, wanted that equipoise of mind which fixes the principles and harmonizes the conduct.—With a spontaneous obligingness of disposition, and an indiscriminating propensity to benevolence, she gained the credit of being amiable, without any other claim to it than that she occasionally emitted the meteor-like traits of a generosity which was involuntary, and an inherent desire of acting right, neither secured by decision of judgement nor adoption of choice; but which was liable to be overcome

come by any temptation that promised to gratify her ruling motives,—vanity and the love of gaiety. An only child, and the heiress of a considerable fortune, she had lost her mother at an early age; and being educated at a great school, where the distinctions of rank and wealth were as tenaciously maintained among her young companions as they were paid court to by a set of venal and rapacious teachers, (with whom she had been unfortunately placed on the recommendation of a lady of high fashion,) she had imbibed, with her earliest notions, a strong degree of vanity, which perhaps did not originally belong to her nature; and a love of *ton*, whence arose a contempt or carelessness of every body who had the misfortune to be excluded from within the pale of fashion, against which the native dispositions of her heart often struggled in vain. On her return home for the summer-holidays, a short time after Mrs. Fitzwilliam first took up her abode in Hampshire,

shire, she found that lady and her daughter with her father at Fort Mervan, and treated by him as visitors of distinction.—She was then thirteen, and Johanna Fitzwilliam only a few months older. They were at this period equally lively, and giddy with most girls of their years; and an intimacy took place between them, which, mutually encouraged by their parents, had stood the test of every change of manners and sentiments, notwithstanding their different modes of education, and the different capacities they unfolded with increasing years. Johanna Fitzwilliam was not blind to the defects of her friend's character; but her intimacy with her was strengthened into habit, which she felt no inclination to break; and affection furnished her with palliatives for those parts of her conduct which she could not approve. She was indeed not wrong in ascribing her chief faults to thoughtlessness and misguided judgement, or rather total want of it.—*These*, she trusted, experience would cor-

rect; and in the mean time she found her a lively companion and an affectionate friend.

She had just quitted school for the last time, and was brought home for the purpose of presiding in her father's house, when her friend's proposed journey furnished her with a pretext, which she had long sought, for asking his permission to visit France. - There was something delightful in the thought of going to the *Continent;* and, though she would have liked Paris better, Montpelier sounded fashionable, and would do very well as an alternative. It was so charming to talk of having travelled! and then she assured her father, that it was impossible to obtain a thorough knowledge of the French idioms and pronunciation without residing some time among the natives. Admiral Tracey needed not this argument to induce his consent; for he saw many advantages from placing her under the protection of the

the sensible and elegant Mrs. Fitzwilliam; and he was likewise desirous that she should see a little more of the world before she took upon her the office of mistress of his house; for which, indeed, she was at present very little qualified. He therefore readily acceded to her wishes; (which, to do her justice, were stimulated in some degree by that affection for Johanna, and desire of being serviceable to her, which she persuaded herself were the principal or sole causes of her eagerness to accompany Mrs. and Miss Fitzwilliam to Montpelier;) and he did so with an attentive delicacy to Mrs. Fitzwilliam's circumstances, by furnishing them with a handsome equipage and suitable retinue; at once providing for that lady's ease and comfort with respect to the conveniences of travelling, and gratifying his daughter in her fondness for shew; who, though she really loved the Fitzwilliams, and was perfectly convinced of their claims to *fashion*, both from their

birth and connections, would not at all have relished the private mode of travelling suitable to their finances. During Mrs. Fitzwilliam's last confinement, she had truly acted the part of a kind and attentive friend; giving up all those designs which she had brought with her, of mingling in the gaieties of the place, and entering the lists for admiration with those of the fair visitors of Montpelier who divide their time between dissipation and confinement. She had united her utmost endeavours with Johanna's to sooth or enliven the languishing hours of the interesting sufferer, for whom she had always felt a kind of filial regard; and whose distressful situation, added to the anxiety and anguish which she saw her friend suffer, now forcibly touched every generous and benevolent feeling of her heart. Not that she would have thus steadily obeyed the dictates of these better feelings, had she found herself beset by any strong temptation to disregard them;

them; but the state in which Mrs. Fitzwilliam arrived at Montpelier, and her continued desire to live as much in private as possible, had precluded the advances of society; and from Johanna she received no example but that of close seclusion and undeviating attendance upon her mother. Biassed therefore, as she always was, by the pressure of immediate circumstances, it was in fact a virtue of necessity, as well as of choice, which had confined her to share with her friend the office of nurse, and kept alive her benevolent affections; which, though warm, were commonly shewn but in the effervescence of a moment, or limited to vague wishes or ineffective sympathy.—Johanna, however, felt infinitely indebted to her. Every failure in her conduct, every error of her nature, seemed atoned for by this one instance of kindness and regard; and, if she had before been attached to her from habit and childish affection, she now added to these the

 vivid

vivid feelings of gratitude and the confirmed approbation of esteem.—Johanna's was a character more strongly marked: though as yet but an unfinished sketch, it was one of striking and masterly effect. She was yet scarcely seventeen; had mingled little in general society, from the time when her mind first began to make reflections for itself; and her ideas, though exhibiting the traits of strong reflection, were singular and self-created. Artless, timid, and almost childish in her general manners, she had always in readiness for every exigency an admirable presence of mind; and the errors of her inexperience were almost instantly detected by a natural correctness of feeling, which wanted but opportunities of trial to render it her best monitor. The Marchioness, with her usual keen penetration and rapid decision, soon distinguished her by the most flattering notice; and she as quickly read the evanescent characters of Miss Tracey's mind: but, as the companion

panion of Johanna, she treated her with politeness; and she found her airy and good-humoured manners afford a relief to the air of sadness that hung round her two unfortunate young friends, which she expected would greatly assist the recovery of their cheerfulness.

It had been Mrs. Fitzwilliam's own desire to be buried at Montpelier, in order to prevent the unnecessary trouble and prolongation of gloomy ideas to her daughter which could not but attend her removal to England: and, as neither of the young ladies were restricted as to time, the Marchioness easily obtained their consent to reside with her as long as she and Adonia should remain at Montpelier. Miss Tracey accordingly wrote to her father, requesting his permission, which was readily granted; and Johanna's application to her guardians was followed by equal success. They were now, therefore, settled in the Marchioness's family; where,

where, by degrees, the melancholy which solitude would have encouraged gave way to the claims imposed by society; and the two fair mourners began once more to bear their part in the hilarity of an extended circle. Adonia's health was still so extremely precarious, that the Marchioness had not thought of fixing any time for her return home; and, as she found many agreeable families among the company who were, like them, prolonging their summer in this mild climate, she gradually met their overtures towards mutual intercourse; and now, with her young party, was in the habit of receiving and occasionally returning their visits. The business that had brought Monsieur d'Orville to Montpelier was not yet completed; and, in the interim, his modest worth, and, still more, his romantic eccentricities, had ingratiated him so much with the Marchioness, (who was fond of what are called characters,) that, entirely overlooking the inferiority

feriority of rank, (which would have been an insurmountable objection to her associating with most men of his station,) she had admitted him to her intimacy; and he was now a constant daily visitor at her hôtel. Through his friendship, St. Loudon also was once more received by her with welcome. The Marchioness's prejudices against him were immediately removed, when she was made acquainted with the real circumstances of those errors, in the commencement of his career in gay life, which De l'Avignon's malignant jealousy had caused to be so widely misrepresented to her; and, though the proofs of authenticity, which appeared in the new report concerning his claims to birth, did not entirely satisfy her pride, they tended not a little to assist the prepossession of his manners: hence St. Loudon in due time gained a place in her esteem, which was equally honorable to himself and [illegible]; for, in doing justice to a character which

she found really amiable, she had both to acknowledge the error of her former judgement, and to combat the secret instances of the violent hatred she had conceived against De l'Avignon, which often created doubts in her bosom, whether it were possible that a character, formed under his eye, could escape the contagion of an hypocrisy so systematic and habitual.—But St. Loudon's was not a character to suffer long under such suspicion. Truth and energy stamped his sentiments. A countenance open and thoughtful; grave, but not formal; and dignified, without arrogance; gave to an attentive observer the most unequivocal assurance that his principles were as correct as his mind was independent; while the native sincerity of his manners, which he possessed the happy talent of still combining with the polish of education, shewed also, that, though he was no stranger to the graces of fashionable life, he despised every fawning art of fashionable dis-

dissimulation. St. Loudon had accompanied his friend to Montpelier with a firm resolution to avoid wilfully throwing himself in the way of the Marchioness's family; yet not without a secret wish that chance might accomplish for him what prudence forbade. His hopes, of emerging from the obscurity which had so long depressed him, were now more elevated than ever; and, though he was at present entirely ignorant how to proceed in order to effect this desirable end, the assurance which he felt that his birth was noble (from the information D'Orville had given him, corroborated by some faint recollections of his early days, which the Abbé Poverlerie's narrative had awakened) revived and exhilarated his passion for Adonia, the moment when he perceived that her manners towards him were unchanged: and from this moment the smiling deity, who sooner or later revenges every rebellion against his dominion, when its basis has been

that of purity of heart and congeniality of mind, scattered his arrows with such arch dexterity, that St. Loudon no longer thought of resisting them; and Adonia received them with smiles, unconscious that they were to influence every movement of her future happiness or misery; while hope and fancy sketched out thousand new and beautiful pictures of felicity for them both.

Health once more began to paint Adonia's cheeks; and the native vivacity of her innocent heart was again seen dancing in her eyes, which beamed their sweetest smiles on St. Loudon, and seemed to acknowledge him as the revivor of all her blighted prospects. In the mean time, the Marchioness's penetration was not unemployed.—She soon perceived the state of Adonia's heart, and was at no loss to discover the cause of her renovated gaiety. She considered St. Loudon's equivocal rank, and his dependent and

and uncertain situation in life, when weighed with Adonia's limited provision in regard to fortune; yet the result of all her anxious ruminations on the subject of their mutual attachment was rather pleasure for the present fortunate change which it had wrought upon her beloved protegée, than apprehension for its future consequences. She had too much reason to dread the renewal of that melancholy from which St. Loudon's arrival had recalled her, to check the productive means of an effect so anxiously wished; and she applied to her artless, and, as she thought, evanescent, partiality two lessons which were the fruits of her own experience. First, that a first impression, which she knew Adonia's to be, might be neither deep nor permanent, and yet bear all the marks of an enthusiastic and indelible attachment; and, secondly, that an union, formed under the most equal circumstances in respect to rank and fortune, might in the event prove utterly

utterly unproductive of happiness. The latter argument, however, she only speculated upon as a remote aid, provided in case of the worst; but of which she believed she should never stand in need; for, judging by her own ready acquiescence, when, by the command of her parents, she had renounced the man who first possessed her heart, she conceived it easy for a young and flexible mind to change its object at the interference of duty; imagining it impossible that Adonia, the work of her own hands, the pupil of her own sentiments, could ever dream of cherishing a serious passion for St. Loudon, unless the mystery of his birth could be satisfactorily elucidated. "We may associate with those who are our inferiors in rank," said she one day to Adonia, though without naming St. Loudon; "we may even make them our companions and friends; for intellectual distinctions are not influenced by the distinctions of rank, and the truly worthy are

are estimable in every station; but, it is infringing on the order of society, breaking down a proper and political barrier, to unite our persons and families with theirs; and, though I would wish to pride myself on something better than the mere accidental circumstances of high birth, it is nevertheless a distinction which ought not to be undervalued. High blood inspires and gives lustre to noble actions: it procures us many real blessings, and we ought to preserve it uncontaminated in its native channel."

Adonia was not conscious of the real situation of her heart; yet the idea of St. Loudon instantly presented itself, and she remained silent to these observations; which were delivered in a manner that obviously indicated the Marchioness thought them unanswerable. But Johanna, with her usual *naïveté*, took up the discourse by declaring, that she did not believe it possible for its most exalted

possessors, in their moments of cool reflection, to fancy any inherent value in high birth, or that any use of it could be proved by the rules of right reason to be conducive to happiness; "for," said she, "experience, as well as reason, teaches us, that we can derive no solid nor retrospective happiness but from the application of our natural virtues or talents; and surely, my dear madame, the distinctions of station, the value of which depends upon opinion, cannot be placed in competition with these." "But, my young friend, the distinctions *we* speak of," replied the Marchioness, "are not to be considered merely as imaginary ones. They have been long instituted, even from the first dawnings of civilization; are universally sanctioned and supported, in every government, under some form or other; and are proved to be necessary and beneficial to that good order and just subordination without which society could not exist." "But does a necessary insti-

institution suppose a happy one?" inquired Johanna timidly; "on the contrary, it seems to me to imply some evil to be kept under; and in that case can at best be but negatively advantageous. Still, my dear madame, this does not affect the happiness of the individual, even allowing it to be beneficial to the community. What I mean to deny is the influence of rank on individual happiness or virtue. We are all originally sprung from one parent-stock, and all carry within our own bosoms the principles and the capacities of what can alone be called felicity. These we may misuse, but the fault will be our own; and they are impartially distributed among all classes of mankind: for, though some seem formed by nature with dispositions which no vexations can acidulate, while others cannot always, by the utmost exertion of their reasoning faculties, defend themselves from passion and irratibility, this difference of natural gifts is found among the lowest

lowest ranks of society equally with the highest; and it appears very evident to me, that nature intended us to find our enjoyments only in what she herself provides. I feel too forcibly, that what are called the prosperities of life, such as rank and independence, are incapable of banishing one gloomy reflection, or softening the harshness of one sorrow, which is rooted in the mind; nor do I find that the consciousness of possessing them inspires me either with a more determined fortitude or a more ardent love of virtue. In poverty and obscurity, I should still be equally grateful and dependent on my Creator; perhaps, inured to hardships, more able to sustain the evils of life without repining; and, indeed, I am persuaded, that we should all be both happier and better, did pride and prejudice create fewer distinctions among us."

"Well, my dear Miss Fitzwilliam," replied the Marchioness, "I perceive you

have

have got upon the grounds of the present fashionable declamation; and I own it is natural for one of your age and dispositions to admire and adopt sentiments which carry the air of such liberality of mind. The rapidity of your ideas has carried you far beyond where we began; but, since you have thus widened the field of our inquiry, let me ask you, whether it is not better to submit to a few errors, (supposing them to be such,) in order to secure many blessings, than to aim at correcting the former at the expence of endangering the latter. A system of political equality, to which your train of arguments would lead, is, and ever will be, a system of anarchy. Nature herself, to whom you appeal, points out the propriety of political by her natural distinctions. The strong were made to protect the weak; the man of virtue furnishes lessons of conduct, and restrains the errors of the vicious; and the man of talents enlightens and assists the un-

tutored mind. Why men were formed to different degrees of virtue or talents we are not to inquire, and cannot learn; but it is evident, that every system of policy, which in the nature of things can be maintained, must carry on this equipoise of power and subordination, through all its provisions, for national security; or men, self-commissioned, would continue it for themselves, according to their several abilities. The strong would trample upon the weak; the crafty abuse the unsuspicious; and all would be engaged in one chaotic struggle for superiority.—The cruelty and oppression attendent upon unrestrained ambition would depopulate the world, and none be left to exult in their dear-bought eminence but a few gloomy tyrants; more ferocious, because goaded by that reason which they have perverted, than the beasts of prey whose savage natures they have imitated.

Since,

"Since, then, a constitutional aristocracy is found necessary and beneficial to the well-being of society, it is the duty of every one to respect and contribute to its support. Without doubt, the privileges of the noblesse, like every other institution formed by men, who can but *devise* plans for the best, not answer for their success, are liable to be abused; and numberless errors will in process of time, by the natural revolution of things, creep into the best organized government; yet it is easier to see errors than to redress them; and a whole, which is generally good, ought not to be disturbed, and consequently endangered, because some of its parts have proved degenerate. Though there are among the nobility men who disgrace their rank, and level themselves by their vices and extortions with the most groveling plebeians, none amongst them, who feel their distinction rightly, will be found to depart from the nobility of virtue; and I will venture to affirm, that there

there is in the consciousness of noble blood an incentive to corresponding greatness of mind which has given birth to many heroic actions that never would have been effected, unstimulated by the natural and laudable pride of supporting the dignity of illustrious ancestry." "You have opened upon me a view of the natural state of society, and the propriety of those distributions of rank of which we were speaking, that never occurred to me before," said Johanna in reply: "I assure you, my dear madame, the ideas which gave rise to my observations were borrowed from no fashionable school; for I have never been in the way of either reading or hearing political subjects discussed; and this is I believe the first time I ever considered any of the matters which you have touched upon: but, as you have explained to me some things which I did not perceive before, will you have the goodness to help me out of another difficulty, and tell me *why that aristo-*

aristocracy, which is found so useful, should be handed to posterity without regard to virtue or talents? If it is an advantageous distinction to the individual, as well as a necessary one to the community, would it not be better to make it a reward than an hereditary right? If it is an incentive to virtue, merely as a political elevation, would it not be doubly so as a moral one?" "The question is natural, my dear," replied Marchioness; "but it is easily answered, from the imbecility of human justice and mens natural partiality to themselves.—Were it customary to render nobility the reward of noble actions, *who* would not conceive himself the object worthy of it? or who would not revolt against a distribution of honors from which he himself is excluded? Nor would it be more difficult to appease the murmurs of jealousy and ambition than to bestow these distinctions worthily. A man may claim reward by one important service to his country,

country, who is in every other respect vile and worthless. Public rewards are the consequence of public services; but of what disorders would they be productive, were we to raise a man at once to dignity and power, whom neither nature nor education had fitted for exercising them? and who can decide on what would constitute a man's true claim to nobility, or restrain him in the lawful exercise of power, admitting that not one action alone, but the tenor of his conduct through a certain number of years, should constitute the claim which he produces? Socrates, one of the wisest and most devout of the Pagan philosophers, passed through life with the reputation of vigorously practising the precepts which he inculcated; yet he was put to death on the charge of Atheism: and many of his historians accuse him of the most shameful private vices; while, on the contrary, others hold him up to mankind as an

example of the severest and most undeviating virtue. Alexander the Great, who was the pupil of Aristotle, and in the beginning of his reign rendered himself as great by his private virtues as by his public triumphs, became so intoxicated by success and ambition; so cruel, passionate, and revengeful; that, not contented with conquering the world, he thirsted to depopulate it also; and by his cruelties and vain glory rendered himself the terror and the scourge of those who had once loved him for his virtues, and admired him for his abilities! This world was never designed as a place of moral retribution; but moral order can only be secured by political institutions; and the diversity of men's minds, their restlessness and their quibbles, render it proper that these institutions should be such as are least irresoluble, or liable to the fewest contingent variations."

 "I feel

"I feel myself inexpressibly indebted to your goodness, my dear madame," said Johanna, "for thus satisfying my inquiries, and calling up so many new ideas in my mind.—What advantages do we not derive from conversation! While it adds to our store of information, it expands the faculties, and exercises powers which otherwise would remain dormant, and which we might for ever be ignorant of possessing. It reminds me of the prismatic glass, on which the sun calls up such a variety of beautiful colours.—But still, my dear madame, do not think me obstinate for persisting in it, since my heart refuses to recognize any intrinsic addition to the individual's happiness from the circumstances either of rank or fortune; the latter may, indeed, enable him to perform more extensive or dazzling acts of munificence; but the poorest peasant, who shares his crust with a starving beggar, purchases to himself an equal proportion of self-exultation. The apples we gathered to-day from the same

tree

tree varied considerably in size and colour, but they were all alike in flavor. Those, which were so finely streaked with red, looked most beautiful while they hung upon the tree; but they were made to gratify the taste, not the eye; and we set little value on their beauty while we were eating them!"

"Now, for heaven's sake, my love!" cried Miss Tracey, (who had been very impatient of what she styled this *most soporific conversation,*) do tell me how you bring about the connection between your apple-tree and your poor peasant with his starving beggar; for I really do not comprehend the allegory, unless your tree was meant to represent the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which brought all our woes upon us! This, to be sure, would be no bad conceit; only you should have *begun* with the tree, instead of bringing up the rear with it. Well, there it stands! then comes Mrs. Eve, and looks at the fine red-streaked fruit, and I will answer for

her choosing the reddest one amongst them. Well, the bait takes; it is so beautiful! She falls greedily on the apple, gives Adam a bite, and then they are both sent a trotting out of Paradise, to gather fruit elsewhere. Then Sin went with them, and Punishment followed; and then you know those laws which you were discoursing about were enacted to bind the monster Sin; and kings, dukes, and barons, were made to keep him in awe. One worthy man was set upon a hill, and another, *equally* worthy, was turned topsy-turvy into the valley.—The dukes and barons swallowed up the goods of the land, and were happy; and the plebeian rabble, though they had the impudence to claim kindred with them through their relationship with Adam and Eve, were utterly cut out of all right of inheritance; and by the nobler branches of the family left to scramble with the thorns and briars, and feed upon the hips and bramble-berries.—Then,

behold,

behold, in yonder ruinous cottage, where an old hat in one place, and a bit of pasted paper in another, fill up the vacated seats of as many window-panes, stands Johanna's worthy peasant, cheerfully administering to the wants of a wretched beggar, who, we may presume, is *equally* ready to observe the golden rule, time and place convenient. Then rises the hurly-burly of some mighty approaching event; and a great Comte passes by in his carriage, followed by a sublime retinue, glittering in laced liveries. He has seen the miserable cottage, and he stops,—graciously stops,—to inquire—the road to—"They are very poor," says he, "but it would need a mine to supply the wants of every one; and then *they* are accustomed to poverty. I am going to subscribe towards the endowment of a new military academy; one must not therefore suffer private distresses to interfere with public duties. However, I will give them a six-sous for their trouble." The poor

man receives the donation thankfully; and the great Comte drives away, exulting in his charitable disposition, which can both afford a six-sous to a poor man and a thousand pounds to a military academy! These two men, who have each displayed such liberal dispositions, may without doubt, as Johanna says, be made equally happy by their virtue; for the one will be gazetted in the subscription-list, over and above the satisfaction of having given a six-sous to a poor man who was dividing his last morsel with a starving beggar; and the other will purchase that beggar's benediction, over and above the consciousness of having acted right. Now this matter being explained, there is no need of farther demonstration to prove that happiness is equally distributed throughout all ranks of mankind, and has its only local seat in the mind. And so, if you please, Johanna, we will go and take a turn on the terrace."

Johanna

Johanna coloured, as indeed she had done through the greater part of this giddy girl's whimsical harangue; for the Marchioness's expressive countenance did not conceal the displeasure that she felt on hearing subjects to her so important treated thus lightly. Johanna rose however to follow her: the Marchioness rose also; but her air was unusually solemn and dignified. "Miss Tracey," said she, going up to her, "you are a *young* lady, and cannot therefore be expected to see things in the same light with those who have had a longer and more intimate acquaintance with life.—This world, Miss Tracey, such as it is, is the world we are placed in; and we find our own advantage in paying deference to its distinctions, and making the best of its errors; but more sacred, more momentous, concerns are ours; and the wit, or vivacity, which are exercised to throw ridicule on any subject connected with these, like the unreasonable ravings of the angry man, scatter their shafts with-

out injuring the object against which they are directed, while they preserve a future sting for the hand which aimed them."

Miss Tracey now blushed deeply, and would have attempted something like apology; but contrition sat awkwardly upon her, and she was not easily rouzed to resentment. She therefore soon rallied her confusion, and with a sportive air, which however was not altogether genuine, assured the Marchioness she had always been of opinion that serious subjects were only so when they were treated seriously; or the legitimacy of the neglected children of Adam might have remained a matter of doubt to the end of time for her; "but, indeed, madame," continued she, dashing a tear from her eye, and forcing a smile, "if I have offended you by my flippancy, or really been a naughty girl, I shall hate the name of Adam and Eve as long as I live!" "You have not offended me, Miss Tracey," said the Marchioness, somewhat softened by her distress,

tress, (which she knew perfectly well how to appreciate,) nor have you done any injury to the topics you have sported with. They are not of a nature to be injured by raillery: they are too venerable, and ought to be treated respectfully. At present, we will say no more about it: do you and Miss Fitzwilliam pursue your walk, while Adonia and I will finish our letters in your absence. You know the post goes off at three, and we shall be rather hurried." From this hour the Marchioness became less and less attentive to Miss Tracey. It was not that lady's manner to cherish pique, especially against those whom she ranked in her class of *negatives*: she regarded any of this class, who had had the misfortune to come under her displeasure, as too insignificant for anger; and if Miss Tracey had not derived some degree of consequence in her eyes from being the friend of Joanna, she would not even have been honored by her reproof; but the offence she had

had been guilty of exhibited, as she thought, a levity of principle which was unpardonable; and, though she liked to encourage the playful gaiety of youth, she had no allowances to make for the slightest excess in it. Miss Tracey had exceeded in a point that touched the only feelings of her nature which she could not entirely vindicate from error, and of which, consequently, she was most tenacious. The Marchioness, finding her future conduct evinced none of that reformation of sentiment which she imagined ought immediately to have followed a reproof from *her*, gave herself no farther trouble concerning her; and at length saw her run in and out of the apartments, and play off her raillery and her frolics, with the same indifference as she would have seen, without remarking, the tricks of her visitor's lap-dog.

CHAP. XXV.

——O Love! in age
Thou art indeed a child; in pow'r a god!

THUS situated, Miss Tracey, who had from the first conceived no great liking for the Marchioness, felt a degree of restraint in her presence which very ill accorded with the natural bent of her disposition; and, though she had not sufficient penetration, or rather attention, to trace the cause of this restraint to its source, it became daily more irksome to her; and she began to repent of having

asked her father's permission to stay with a woman who, she declared, never looked at her without making her feel queer and uncomfortable: hence she often wished she had returned immediately to England, instead of engaging herself to remain so much longer at Montpelier.—But Johanna, fondly attached to her cousin, and almost venerating the Marchioness, did every thing in her power to counteract these regrets; and Miss Tracey was so much the being of the moment, that the slightest attention from any other quarter was sufficient for the time to banish the impression of the Marchioness's coldness. Not being readily able to bring forward any reasonable plea for altering her design, she finally suffered herself to be guided by Johanna, who was extremely desirous that they should fulfil their first engagement; both as her own feelings prompted her to cultivate that intimacy with her cousin which had been so strongly recommended by her departed mother,

mother, and in compliance with Adonia's wishes, to whom she found their departure would be a real loss. The feelings of Adonia were by nature much more acute and deeply rooted than Johanna's. Continued ill health had relaxed her fortitude, and the peculiar circumstances which varied their common misfortune, in having each been robbed of a beloved parent, had fallen heaviest upon her. While Johanna had corrected the first excess of affliction, and ceased to lament a loss that was irretrievable, Adonia, equally reasonable, equally amiable, but less able to contend with an accumulation of bitter reflections, from the peculiar delicacy and sensibility of an enfeebled frame, still secretly languished beneath her wounds; and her lingering convalescence kept no pace with the expectation of her friends, although in society she seemed disposed to banish uneasy remembrance, and even bore her part, in the little convivial meetings lately instituted

instituted by the Marchioness, with a cheerfulness that astonished Johanna, to whom alone she had sometimes ventured to unfold her inward sufferings. Johanna had engaged this mournful confidence, not more by the similarity of their misfortunes, than by the union of gentleness and firmness with which she could both feel for and reason with her. With the Marchioness she was more reserved; for that lady seemed to expect from her a degree of fortitude which was hardly compatible with her sensibility and extreme youth; and she was also deterred from owning to her the struggles of her mind by the fear of appearing querulous and ungrateful.

Johanna had with much pain remarked the Marchioness's dislike of her companion, Miss Tracey, from whom, (as she believed her journey to Montpelier was entirely to oblige her,) she could not with propriety disengage

disengage herself. She therefore contrived as much as possible to amuse Miss Tracey, and keep her occupied by other objects; and, as it was only when they retired at night that she had any opportunity for those private conversations which were so soothing to Adonia, she chiefly attached herself to the former through the day, encouraged her lively sallies, and acquiesced in her favourite amusements. Miss Tracey was particularly fond of the exercise of walking; and, as it often happened that Adonia was too much indisposed to make one in their pedestrian excursions, Johanna and her friend were accustomed to take long morning-rambles by themselves.—About a fortnight after the conversation which had given rise to Miss Tracey's unlucky lapse of due respect for the sentiments of her noble hostess, as they were pursuing one of their favourite walks, (which they had been tempted by the beauty of the morning to extend beyond its usual boundary,) they met a gentleman

gentleman on horse-back, galloping towards the town. They were only divided from the road by a row of trees and a slight park-paling, low enough to give them a full view of whatever was passing; and, what Miss Tracey at the moment thought still more accommodating, it did not conceal them; for the stranger immediately slackened his pace, and seemed to observe them with the natural curiosity of a gay young man (for such he appeared to be) on seeing two fashionable-looking young women alone, at such a distance from any habitation. His foaming horse, the negligence of his dress, and the thinness of his visage, bespoke the restlessness and disorder of his mind; but Miss Tracey soon recognised the person of Lord Arunville, (whose brother, the Honorable Mr. Grybton, had been one of her earliest friends,) and returned his salute before he knew that either of the ladies, whom he had honored with a bow *en badinage*, had the slightest claim on his

his remembrance. He stopped, however, on a mark of attention so little expected; and, drawing nearer to the paling, soon recollected Miss Tracey, whose father he had once or twice visited at Fort Mervan during her last school-vacation. On this discovery, he immediately dismounted; and, giving his horse to his servant, whom he directed to proceed with it to the Agneau d'Or, he hastened to join the ladies, who were waiting for him with very different feelings. Miss Fitzwilliam, who had never seen him before, and knew him only by report, felt extremely uneasy at his joining them; for he was evidently a good deal intoxicated, and there was a wildness and levity in his look and manner which alarmed and disconcerted her. But her companion was all pleasure and surprise; and, in her usual giddy way, without considering appearances or adverting to consequences, she hoped he was come to make some stay at Montpelier, for it was the stupidest place on earth, and there

there would be no existing in it much longer, without some fresh supply of beaux! "If it is the stupidest place on earth," replied his Lordship, laughing, "I am not much beholden to your charity for inviting my stay, especially as there is no resisting such a hint from you. But, upon my soul, I may well believe your report, when I see two such fair beings unattended amid these woods and wilds! Were there no Damon nor Sylvanders to prevent such a solecism in gallantry? But I am thankful for their defection; they have left the field for me! And now, all you great and little musites! who scamper about the cloud-tipped Parnassus, or cluster with the bees of Hybla, assist me to frame my votive offering to the deities of this sylvan scene! O Proserpina! for the flowers now that, frighted, thou lettest fall from Dis's waggon! violets dim, but sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes or Cytherea's breath! pale primroses, that die unmarried!—No, no, they wont do!—but,

but, faith! ladies, my memory is not in such high preservation as it used to be; and if I stay here I shall soon have none left at all.—When did you arrive at Montpelier, Miss Tracey? I have been half over the globe in quest of you. How could you be so cruel as just to shew yourself, and then disappear, like the ignus fatuus, to cheat us with false hopes? You might as well have remained with your duenna at —— house." He now paused, not for a reply, for he was hardly conscious of the rhapsody which he had uttered, but because he had literally run himself out of breath; and he gazed with gloomy wildness in Johanna's face, whom till now he seemed scarcely to have noticed.—"I have been some time at Montpelier," said Miss Tracey, who still did not see, or was determined not to see, the state he was in: "but how did you know, my Lord, that I had quitted school? You have not been in England lately?" "Yes, faith! and never wish to see it again; unless

unless you, or your fair companion, (and he looked earnestly upon her,) would make a Paradise of it by accompanying me." He now became silent and thoughtful; while Miss Tracey ran on with a thousand rapid questions relative to his family, (of which the Hon. Charles Grybton was however the sole object,) the cause of his coming to Montpelier, and the state of affairs among the fashionable circles in England. To all these Lord Arunville answered only by monosyllables, while Miss Fitzwilliam maintained a profound silence, wishing to signify to her volatile companion her disapprobation of encouraging the attendance of a man, who, in his present disorder, was so unfit for the society of ladies. But Miss Tracey, who, as yet knew little of the forms prescribed by the world, and who, gay and unsuspicious, felt in the present instance no internal warnings of prudence, delighted to engross the attentions of a person of his

rank. Really pleased to have met so unexpectedly an acquaintance, and a native of her own country, she continued her questions and remarks till they had almost reached the town, when Lord Arunville inquired with whom she lived, and where he might have the honor of waiting upon her.—"I am at present with the Marchioness d'Estreaux," said she; "but it is this lady who holds me in bondage. The Marchioness, however, I believe, would be very glad to favor my escape." "The Marchioness d'Estreaux!" exclaimed he: "what a lucky fellow am I, to find all my best friends at once! I must wait on the Marchioness to-morrow." "And why not now?" cried the thoughtless Miss Tracey. "Why, faith! *che sarà megliore*: but shall I find her at home? will she admit a visitor at this early hour, *late* indeed I may call it, for I have not yet paid my compliments to Morpheus?" "Allow me then to advise you not to delay the performance of so necessary a duty," said Miss

Miss Fitzwilliam. "If you will give us leave, we will make your apologies to the Marchioness for to-day; and I do not doubt that she will be happy to see you to-morrow."—"Cruel!" cried Lord Arunville, "to defer my happiness! but, notwithstanding your polite hint, *mia bella incognita*, I will be kinder to myself: you must positively allow me the honor of attending you home." There was nothing Miss Fitzwilliam dreaded more than his accompanying them home; for she was sensible that it would offend the Marchioness; and anxiously wished to prevent Miss Tracey's incurring her father displeasure, who she knew would be immediately and deservedly blamed for encouraging his attendance in his present state of inebriety. "Indeed, sir, we cannot allow you," said she with a steady and commanding air: "to-morrow the Marchioness may perhaps be at leisure to see you, but to-day she really cannot."—"But to-morrow, madame, I perhaps cannot

cannot see her; to-morrow I may be in Paris, in England, in heaven! What say you, Miss Tracey, is there any time like the present? Oh! I see you smile assent! *Allons, donc!*"—" Pardon me, sir," said Johanna with earnestness, " if I again hint to you, that your visit cannot at present be welcome to the Marchioness. You must be sensible that you are not quite yourself; and surely would not wish to give distress, which you really do, by persisting in your intention of attending Miss Tracey just now. There is a lady residing with the Marchioness who is much indisposed, and your abrupt entrance might perhaps greatly agitate and flutter her, as she is not used to see strangers, and the Marchioness never leaves her."—"Another lady?" cried Lord Arunville with wild emotion, as if newly awakened from a dream. " Is she young? is she handsome? is she—oh! tell me! is she Mademosielle de Rosier?" Still more startled and alarmed by the strange

eagerness

eagerness of his inquiry, Johanna hesitated, and endeavoured to evade a direct answer, from the fear of only accelerating his design of accompanying them. "She is a cousin of mine," said she at length; "and her state of health is so extremely delicate, it is impossible to say what might not be the consequence of any sudden intrusion!" "What is there then so terrible in me?" cried he; "but, tell me, may I request, madame, the favor of your name? You cannot be Mademoiselle de Rosier's cousin? you are *une Angloise?*" "My name, sir, is Fitzwilliam."—"And your cousin's name?" "There is something extremely odd in your thus questioning one who has not the honor of your acquaintance," replied Miss Fitzwilliam, whose patience was now quite exhausted: "nor do I consider myself at liberty to answer your question; for it is in itself an infringement of the laws of decorum which ought not to be complied with, and may perhaps be particularly offensive as it regards

gards my cousin."—"Oh! what a deal of scorn looks beautiful in the contempt and anger of her lip!" exclaimed he. "Whether your cousin is Mademoiselle de Rosier or not, I am determined to have a peep at her; for the whole family of you must be angels!" They had now reached the door of the Marchioness's hôtel; and, without attending to any farther repulse, Lord Arunville walked, up stairs with them. The sound of voices directed him to the Marchioness's dressing-room, where she and Adonia were seated at work, with St. Loudon beside them; and, forcing his way past the young ladies, who would have attempted to conduct him to another apartment, he abruptly entered. Disordered as he was, he became instantly sensible of the change in Adonia looks since he had parted from her, and the impropriety he had been guilty of in disregarding Miss Fitzwilliam's warnings; for Adonia, easily agitated, and feeling particularly uncomfortable at the sight of

 Lord

Lord Arunville, from the recollection of the scene in which they had last met, grew pale and red alternately; and trembled so violently, that the Marchioness, apprehensive of her fainting, reproved Lord Arunville, with more than her usual haughtiness, for not having previously sent up his name. "You knew, my Lord," said she, "that I should at all times be happy to see you; but a little attention to decorum prevents many mistakes." "I beg ten thousand pardons!" said Lord Arunville, as soon as the party were seated, and Adonia restored to some degree of composure; "I am truly ashamed and concerned to have caused so much disturbance. My impatience to see you, my Lady Marchioness, made me heedless of forms; but, had I dreamed of finding Mademoiselle de Rosier here,—of seeing her, I mean, so much indisposed, —I would undoubtedly have spared myself and you the discomposure of so unceremonious a meeting." "I am truly

glad

glad to see you," replied the Marchioness, whom the propriety of his apology had entirely satisfied; "and beg you will think no more of an unintentional offence. The flutter into which you threw my young friend by your abrupt entrance was all I regretted; but that is past. Her health, as you may perceive, is extremely languid; and the slightest surprise is apt to overpower her spirits.— I hope health," continued she, "is not also the object of your Lordship's pursuit; and yet I am sorry to observe that your appearance contradicts this hope. You have not been long ill, however, I flatter myself; and the air of Montpelier is undoubtedly very salutary." "Faith! I do not know that it will prove so to me," replied he, relapsing into his former wandering.—"They say I am travelling for my health, but they are damnably deceived! I am travelling in pursuit of happiness, Marchioness, and have unfortunately fixed upon the very spot which

contains my bane! Not that I chose it wilfully; but we are blind mortals, my Lady Marchioness! Fate binds us with an adamantine chain, and spreads a filmy mist before our eyes.—I believe my head is a little disordered. No wonder! I have led a sad racketing life since I saw you.

"The wanton God, who pierces hearts,
Tips with fire his pointed darts;
But the swain disdains to pine,
Who bathes his wcunds in rosy wine."

He had for some moments fixed his eyes on Adonia, with a look of deep scrutiny, as if he would have read her soul. A faint blush now coloured her cheeks; but she endeavoured to hide her confusion by a shew of feigned anger. "And pray, my Lord," said she, "am I so *much* altered, that you seem thus to doubt the testimony of your senses?" "Adonia!" said he, going up to her, and seizing both her hands;—"no,—pardon me! Mademoiselle de Rosier,—do not ask me why

why my eyes are riveted upon you? It is a spell, a fatal charm, which cannot be counteracted; but lay the blame on Fate, who has all my life-long placed a gleaming falchion between me and happiness!"

"Your Lordship abounds in poetical images!" said Miss Tracey: "I never knew before that you were such a favorite with Apollo; but at present, indeed, you have a good right to his notice; for you know, (to speak in your own style,) 'The poet's eye in a fine phrenzy rolls.'"—

"Phrenzy!" retorted he; "no, not mad;—I am only likely to become so!"

He now returned gloomily to his seat, and for some minutes a profound silence prevailed through the whole party. St. Loudon felt as if a thousand daggers had pierced him!—Lord Arunville's deep-rooted passion for Adonia had been here exhibited to his alarmed fancy in the most unequivocal point of view. She had been agitated and overcome by his sudden entrance. Why should his appearance have

produced these emotions? Why did she blush at Lord Arunville's regards, but from the consciousness of sentiments which were fatal to his peace?—"But why fatal?" he inquired of himself: "*she could perhaps never have been mine!* The improbability of such an event I have always known, and reconciled myself to: Can I then be selfish and unreasonable enough to wish her to withhold her preference from a man whose rank and fortune oppose no barriers to his happiness! who alone, perhaps, possesses the qualifications necessary for ensuring hers? But I will not anticipate the misery of that which I cannot, ought not, to disapprove! Report says Lord Arunville is engaged; and, if so, why should I torment myself with apprehensions, which, though I know them to be folly, bring along with them sensations of such agony? May Adonia be happy! may the fortunate man whom she blesses with her hand be worthy of her! and, oh! may no sudden

burst

burst of overwhelming and vain regret, no transport of unmanly jealousy, ever tempt me to wound her gentle nature with the secret of my hopeless sufferings! They are voluntary; for have I not courted her society? Let me then shew that reason governs my will, and vindicate the past by my future self-command!" St. Loudon possessed the power of reasoning down his most turbulent emotions, though he could not sap the fountain of a deep-rooted passion. Guided by this mental soliloquy, he now interrupted the silence which still pervaded the circle, by asking whether his Lordship had touched at Paris on his road to the South? and whether he could give him any new information as to the state of politics? "Immersed in politics of my own," Lord Arunville gloomily replied, "public affairs have nothing in them to interest me; and, faith! it would be damned-bad policy to perplex oneself with foreign mischief, when we need all our powers to defend the fortress at home!

 But

But why do you ask, sir, whether I have been at Paris? It does not lie in the route hither?" and, without waiting for a reply, "No, no!" continued he, "I am not in a state for Paris at present! I must revive the withered roses of peace before I return thither!" "And why not the roses of health?" said the Marchioness. "You acknowledge that you have been leading a destructive life; your appearance indicates exhausted health; and it is evident to me, that at present the fatigue of your journey adds to your indisposition; and yet you abandon all care of yourself, and think only how to dissipate the present moment. I might be selfish enough, at another time, to request your stay at the expence of a greater inconvenience; but at present you must really allow me to advise your returning to your lodgings, and nursing yourself for a while, for you certainly require both regimen and repose."—"I have been at no lodging yet, madame," he replied; "nor do I know

know where to lay my head.—I am but this moment arrived.—Do not insist upon my abridging this short respite from my cares!—It is such a forlorn comfortless business to lie at an inn!—and, besides, I do not mean to go to bed these two hours." "To bed!" exclaimed the Marchioness; "are you then really so ill?" "I have not been in bed these two nights!" rejoined Lord Arunville; "*that* is my only complaint.—But you know there is no persuading oneself into a disposition for sleep." "Not if we slight the proper means," replied the Marchioness. "I do not now wonder at your *looking* so wretchedly; for a proportion of sleep in the four-and-twenty hours is of itself absolutely necessary to health; and I must therefore insist upon your getting yourself a comfortable bed as soon as you can.—If want of company is your only argument against leaving us, I can answer for St. Loudon, that he will be happy to accompany and assist you in finding

a proper lodging." St. Loudon immediately rose, and declared his readiness to attend him; and Lord Arunville, though unwillingly, rose also. He bowed to the Marchioness, and thanked her for her good advice: then advancing to Adonia, his countenance shaded with a mixture of gloom and wildness which startled and terrified her,—"You are strangely altered, Mademoiselle de Rosier," said he, "since I last saw you. I fear all is not right within!" pointing to his heart;—"but, trust me, you will gain nothing by cherishing vain regrets!" Adonia burst into tears; her feelings too truly assented to the observation. "O Adonia, Adonia!" continued he, shuddering at the sight of her tears, "are we then both doomed to wretchedness? The fairest flower of Paradise, art thou also blighted by noxious dews? Proud imperious honor, what a sacrifice is mine! but I will obey its mandate!—Adonia, I will see you no more!—I could have borne my own sorrows;

rows; but to see you thus languishing and drooping; so fair, so lovely, a victim; utterly distracts my resolution, and I know not what I do! To-morrow I shall leave Montpelier. I would not for the world distress you thus again. May every fabled messenger of peace become realized around you! Heaven bless and preserve you!"—So saying, he abruptly snatched his hat, and departed; followed by the astonished and doubly-agonized St. Loudon, who could now hardly doubt that Adonia's young and innocent heart had been thoughtlessly bestowed on Lord Arunville; whom nature had indeed liberally gifted with her most captivating attractions, and who, he knew, though frequently the idle votary of dissipation, and the thoughtless prodigal of high intellectual endowments, was nevertheless strongly endued with the principles of virtue, and steadily devoted to the generally-received notions of honor. "He is not unworthy of her!" thought St. Loudon;

don: "but some unknown obstacle lie between them. Perhaps his engagement with Mademoiselle d'Argueau may be more than an idle rumour. Perhaps it is to this which he alludes, when he talks of the imperious demands of honor? But why then is not this engagement fulfilled? Eight months have elapsed since it was first talked of; and yet he has not been in Paris for some time, and shews no design of going thither?"

Every conjecture on this head only ended in new perplexity to St. Loudon; and, since his own hopes had ever been but feeble,—since he was thus induced to suspect that Adonia's affections were bestowed on another,—he determined, if possible, to discover and assist Lord Arunville's endeavours to surmount the unknown difficulties which to him seemed to impede the happiness of two hearts mutually affected, and to one of whom he would joyfully have sacrificed the dearest

wishes

wishes of his own.—Lord Arunville was in a situation that particularly disposed him to be communicative; but on this account, as he was evidently not master of himself, Ferdinand would at present have declined any conversation which might lead him to disclosures he might afterwards repent; but they had not been gone from the Marchioness's lodgings many minutes, when Lord Arunville led the way to reciprocal confidence, by asking St. Loudon what had brought him to Montpelier? This was a question which it regarded St. Loudon's personal safety to answer explicitly; for, as Lord Arunville was intimately acquainted with his mysterious persecutor, De l'Avignon, it was necessary that he should inform him of his real reasons for concealing himself from him, in order to bespeak his secrecy. He therefore briefly sketched the circumstances of their difference, though without naming the cause of the challenge; dwelt particularly on his dislike of an

idle life, as a principal motive for his determining to resist the Comte's overtures of reconciliation; and declared his intention (which was really the case) of entering into some public employment, as soon as he should be able to settle securely in England. Lord Arunville assured him, with sincerity, that he would be happy to forward his views in England in any way in which he might have it in his power to be serviceable to him.—The modest but spirited ingenuousness of St. Loudon had greatly interested Lord Arunville when he saw him in Paris in the character of an obscure dependent; and he was now doubly pleased with the independency of his sentiments, and with the manly dignity which his conduct in regard to De l'Avignon displayed. His heart, peculiarly warmed and softened by the scene he had just quitted, opened towards him as to a friend in whom he longed to confide all his internal distresses; and they no sooner reached the inn,

inn, whither Ferdinand conducted him, than, impatient of the agonizing feelings which oppressed him, yet in all his confusion of thought instinctively sensible of the imprudence of confiding so implicitly in one with whom he was but slightly acquainted, he began by saying, "Will you bear with my ravings for a while, St. Loudon? and will you promise, solemnly promise, to bury in your own bosom whatever I may now disclose to you? I know that I am intoxicated; for I drank hard last night to drown care, and have not yet slept away the effects of my potation; and, when a man is in such a state as this, he may be hurried into subjects which it would become him better to be silent upon.—But I believe you are an honest fellow, St. Loudon: I have always thought you so; and, if I am not much deceived, you are more than commonly interested in the chief subject of my miseries."

St.

St. Loudon, unwilling to take any advantage of his present disorder, here interrupted him by endeavouring to demonstrate, that it would be better to defer his communication till he was more master of himself. He entreated him to take some refreshment, and represented that he was not now in a state to exhaust himself by conversation. But he spurned at the mention of delay: "Who, St. Loudon, would waste a care upon this worthless corporeal machine, when its spiritual inhabitant cries aloud for succour and relief?—I expect you to advise me; to sooth, at least, if you cannot succour!" He then, with an energy of manner and wildness of expression, prompted by the peculiar frame of his mind and the effects of the wine he had drunk, which seemed to operate on his head in proportion to the degree of nervous agitation his words excited, ran over all the particulars of his first blind and misplaced attachment, his engagement to Mademoiselle d'Argneau,

gneau, and his subsequent unfortunate prepossession. "I was born with hasty imperious passions," said he. "My education was not such as was likely to counteract the mischief of nature, and my habits of life have been calculated to feed the devouring flame: yet, in all my errors I have ever respected moral order, and retained an ardent love of virtue. —It is this which has rendered my misery complete; and the man is justly punished, is doubly criminal, who acts against the lights of reason, and who feels, without obeying, the secret monitions of conscience! Had I been entirely insensible to the beauties of morality, I might have continued blind, as at first, to Mademoiselle d'Argneau's defects; and fulfilled my mad engagement with the willingness of a self-devoted victim: her transcendent beauty might have fixed my wandering fancy, and the false glitter of her wit and external accomplishments would have been sufficient to hold captive

a mind

a mind too plient to the influence of such deceitful and empty charms. Had Mademoiselle d'Argneau even acted with a more consistent dissimulation, had she continued the deceptions of sensibility and affection by which she first won me, I might have been comparatively happy, and resigned to my lot; but the moment she had ensnared her victim, she disdained even to flatter him with a feigned regard; or, if she did secretly prefer me before the despicable herd of triflers who surrounded her, her conduct glaringly evinced, that she could sacrifice to the outward triumph of one insignificant conquest, the peace or honor of the man whose future fate is bound up with her own. She shewed me, in short,—flagrantly shewed me,—that her transient partiality had been solely directed towards my adventitious advantages; that my rank and fortune alone had determined her choice! It is my bane, my misfortune, St. Loudon, that, faulty and dissipated as I am my-self,

self, I cannot endure the want of principle or of sentiment in those with whom I am connected!—I was formed to give and participate the refinements of virtuous love. My friends wished me to marry, and I was sensible that the attachment of an amiable and virtuous woman could alone restrain the wild excesses into which passion and habit were for ever hurrying me. What a choice did I make! A woman without sensibility, without sentiment!—a rainbow borrowing her hues from the ruling planet of the sphere in which accident has placed her! But I need not vindicate my own inconstancy by her deficiency in every thing that could fix a heart like mine. You know Adonia de Rosier!—Wonder not that the contrast exhibited so forcibly should have dissolved every remaining spell which dazzled me in Mademoiselle d'Argneau! They were perpetually together; the artless, the sensible, the modest, Adonia, with not a thought disguised,

not a look or sentiment which is not the genuine offspring of sensibility and refinement, was for ever linked with this giddy, yet designing, and experienced coquette, whose every look has its studied lesson; whose every word speaks the language of levity or dissimulation; whose every wish is founded in vanity; whose every affection is centered in self! O St. Loudon, wonder not that I soon loved Adonia! Who could be insensible to such an union of every thing lovely and interesting in the form of woman! every thing gentle and estimable in the female mind! Yourself, my friend, have felt the power of her charms!—You blush, —you would wish to hide the irresistible prepossession! St. Loudon, rather blush if you did not love her! rather cherish, rather glory in, your chains!—But yours is freedom to what I suffer!—You may indulge the illusions of hope, and flatter your fancy with visions of futurity: for me there is no hope,—no fancy visionary enough

enough to deceive! I am doubly fettered! devoted to Adonia, and compelled by my own blind fatal precipitation, to an union with another!—an union which my soul shrinks from; which is rendered doubly formidable by the idea of what *might have been!*"

St. Loudon shuddered and grew pale with expectation, while Lord Arunville paused a moment, as if to find words more soft, more appropriate, to Adonia, than those which had presented themselves. "Yes, St. Loudon! something whispers me that Adonia would not have been insensible to my tenderness, had fate permitted our earlier meeting; had we met before the dreadful, the detested, period which stamped an interdiction on all my hopes of happiness! Think me not unreasonably vain, nor too presuming on slight appearances: I am not a self-sufficient coxcomb, St. Loudon; but I have seen,—I have witnessed"—"Enough, my

my Lord!" said St. Loudon, interrupting him with emotion; "I can interpret all that you would say; but the subject is too sacred for words." "You perceive it then; you have penetrated the whole extent of my misery,—the lost possibility that embitters reflection?" inquired Lord Arunville with an eager impatience, which sought, yet dreaded, conviction.—"I perhaps guess to what you allude, my Lord," said St. Loudon firmly; "but mine are only conjectures. We ought not to decide rashly on a subject so delicate; and you, my Lord, are the last man on earth who should encourage these dreamings. They are injurious to the object; they are obnoxious to your own happiness." "I know it, St. Loudon,—too well I know it; but could you be thus calm, thus reasonable, were you placed in a situation like mine?" "Yes, my Lord!" replied St. Loudon, with an aspect of reproof: "I would not sully the delicacy of such a subject by even naming

naming it to my own heart!" "Yes! we can always act the part of another to perfection!" muttered Lord Arunville with a satirical and gloomy smile: "but I might have expected this when I confided in *my rival!*—And so, sir," continued he, going up to him with an air of defiance,—"and so you think me a coxcomb, a vain presuming ideot, who would blazon the suggestions of a despicable and unfounded vanity—at the expence of whom? of Adonia de Rosier?—of a pure and mild being, whom it would be profanation to name without respect, whom it would be brutal cruelty to injure! You think me capable of this?—St. Loudon, neither you nor any man alive shall say so with impunity!" "I told you, my Lord, when you began upon the subject, that it would be better to wave it for the present," replied St. Loudon. "If you cannot discuss it without these gusts of violence, at least acknowledge that you were forewarned: I wished not to take

take advantage of your present situation, by encouraging a disclosure of what at another time you would perhaps have scrupulously confined to your own bosom; and you must permit me to say, that this misapprehension, this violence, on your part, is wholly unreasonable and unmerited." "I own it, I own it, St. Loudon!" cried Lord Arunville in a hurrying and confused way. "You are too generous, you are every way my superior! But you know not what it is to suffer as I do, and therefore cannot allow for the extravagances prompted by such a situation." He then sank into gloomy and profound silence; and St. Loudon, thinking that he wished to be alone, left him; promising to call upon him next day. Persuaded as St. Loudon was that Adonia's affections were in the possession of another, and feeling as he did all the agony of this belief, he yet could not restrain the desire he now conceived to examine how she was affected by Lord Arunville's late

late visit; and his steps almost instinctively conducted him to the Marchioness's hôtel, before he had debated the propriety of so soon repeating his visit.—He was introduced into the drawing-room, where only Miss Tracey and Johanna were; and the former immediately attacked him on the state in which he had left his patient, (as she called Lord Arunville,) who she declared to be the best actor of a mad scene she had ever given audience to. The seriousness of the subject and St. Loudon's grave replies did not at all check the thoughtless gaiety she had commenced with, and she enumerated all the circumstances of Lord Arunville's late conduct with a rapidity that silenced opposition, and a colouring of ridicule which no one, less childish and unthinking than herself, would have ventured to sport upon such an occasion.

Shocked as St. Loudon inwardly was by this ill-placed *badinage*, he could not help often giving her the tribute of an involuntary smile. His countenance was, in spite of himself, faithless to the settled solemnity of his mind; for it answered only to the lighter sensations which passed over him without touching his heart; and Fanny was the more encouraged by her success, as she perceived his efforts to prevent it.—Johanna's gravity had long been overpowered: a young mind, not particularly interested in the object, is easily led away by the influence of ridicule; and a convulsive fit of laughter, which her heart all the time was condemning, followed some ludicrous image Miss Tracey had just started, when the Marchioness and Adonia entered. A sudden revulsion operated on both the young ladies. Miss Fitzwilliam's cheeks were covered with blushes; and Fanny, though feeling nothing like shame, was instantly overawed by the presence of the Marchioness,

chioness, and became silent and embarrassed. St. Loudon too was silent, and his looks perplexed: he had thought of no excuse for this second visit, and he imagined that the Marchioness regarded him with coldness. Adonia was more pale and languid than before; she walked with difficulty, and he led her to a seat, without venturing to examine her countenance.—After some moments of uncomfortable restraint to all, the Marchioness broke the general silence, by lamenting that they had interrupted so much merriment. Johanna's blushes increased; and, the sight of her confusion softening the gravity of the Marchioness's air, she inquired of St. Loudon, in a livelier tone, what secret conspiracy they had been engaged in that made them all look so like detected criminals? "It was not, I hope, against *le grand monarque!* We are none of us democrats here I believe. But I rather suspect that my young friends have been regaling upon a ban-

quet of Miss Tracey's ridicule, which is certainly light pleasant diet at the moment, if it does not afterwards turn to heaviness: was it not so St. Loudon?"—for to address Miss Tracey herself on such a subject was quite out of the Marchioness's system. Miss Tracey, however, whose volubility was restored by the slightest encouragement, answered for herself, that, indeed, she was a sad thoughtless girl, but there was no resisting certain circumstances. "Believe me, my dear madame," said the inconsiderate girl, "if you had like me been an indifferent spectator of that hurly-burly look, that civil war of features, which broke out on his distracted Lordship's countenance, when he went up and told Adonia with such a lover-like air what a fright she was grown, you would mentally have laughed as heartily as I did: but this wonder-working sympathy has such different effects on different habits! I dare say Adonia thought it very pathetic: and

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I verily believe that even you, my dear Marchioness, bore a part in the soft contagion." Conscious that she had now gone too far, the concluding words had hardly escaped her, ere she stopped and looked fearfully at the Marchioness. She had now indeed effectually disgusted this lady's benevolent feelings; she had offended her pride by the familiarity of a personal remark; she had wounded her darling Adonia, while in a state of mind and body which rendered her keenly susceptible of the slightest attack on her native delicacy of feeling: and, darting a look in which there was a degree of contempt and indignation such as she had never expressed towards her before, she rose with an air of offended majesty, and left the room without uttering a word. Not only Miss Tracey, but the whole party now seemed awe-struck; surprise and distress marked different characters on every countenance, while all bore a part in the general consternation; and a

 violent

violent flood of tears from Miss Tracey was the first interruption which disturbed their silence. "Had she spoken to me," cried she, sobbing; "had she ever scolded me heartily, I should not have minded her half so much!—She thinks me not worth reproving, incapable of feeling, bad hearted!" St. Loudon intreated her to be calm. "She is noble minded," said he, "and this is but a momentary resentment, which you ought not to consider thus seriously: it will soon pass away!" "Never, never!" cried Miss Tracey: it is contempt, not resentment! She despises me, she has always done so! But why do I expose myself to her contempt? I will bear it no longer. To-morrow, Johanna, I must leave Montpelier!" So saying, she hurried to her own apartment. Johanna followed, astonished at a violence of feeling of which till now she had thought her friend incapable; and St. Loudon, fearing that his presence might be a restraint on Adonia, who he imagined would

would be anxious to join her agitated companions, almost immediately took his leave.—"Would I were in England!" thought he, as he walked pensively towards D'Orville's lodgings: "would I were in England, or in any place but this!—where my heart is enervated by a vain tenderness, my thoughts perpetually revolving futile and romantic dreams, and my time stealing unprofitably away, unmarked by one action which can satisfy future reflection!"

CHAP. XXVI.

Is it your sport to steal away our hearts, like heathen Jove,
Beneath a borrow'd form; then re-assume the god,
Ascend your skies, and leave the slighted maid to die of weeping?

BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

JOHANNA now judged that their longer stay at Montpelier would only be productive of fresh animosities between two characters so jarring as the giddy Miss Tracey, whose flighty thoughtlessness no warnings could correct, and a woman who seemed to have been exempted by nature from the common follies and weaknesses of her sex, and knew not how to

to bear with indiscretions for which her own feelings had never taught her to frame excuses. She therefore no longer opposed Miss Tracey's determination of returning to England, as soon as they could arrange the necessary preparations for their journey; but on examining the state of their finances, they found that it would be impossible to proceed until they could receive further remittances; and, in the interval which this delay occasioned, other obstacles arose to detain them, more serious and alarming than to be out-weighed by any inducement which they could have to quit their present safe asylum. It was at this period that the memorable overthrow of the Bastile, the murder of the respectable De Launey, and the other acts of rebellion which accompanied these events, drew the attention of all France, and paved the way to farther outrages; which an universal spirit of revolt, lately kindled, soon extended throughout the whole kingdom. The scenes of tumult

and political agitation that Paris every where presented in an aspect peculiarly alarming, had already driven thence many families; who, satisfied with the lately instituted change in the government, had not yet determined on any active part in the threatened counter-revolution; and many more, actuated merely by fears for their own individual safety, had withdrawn their families and property to a more secure retreat. The humane, the unoffending, the lamented, Monsieur de Launey, who had fallen a victim to the popular indignation against that engine of arbitrary power of which his ill fortune had given him the superintendency, was the intimate and esteemed friend of the Marquis d'Estreaux. As furious in revenge as he was unbounded in his attachments, D'Estreaux's rage against the perpetrators of this atrocious murder gave to the probable consequences of the downfall of the Bastile every aggravation of recriminated injury which his own

own inflamed passions could suggest.—He imagined that all Paris ought to rise up with him, to revenge the unmerited fate of his lamented friend; and, foreseeing nothing but a continuation of bloodshed and devastation, he immediately dispatched a courier to his wife, commanding her on no account to think of returning to Paris until she should receive farther instructions from himself.

From this advice, as well as the alarming accounts received from many of the provinces, the Marchioness strongly opposed the departure of the young friends during this season of commotion; and Admiral Tracey, alarmed, and anxious for his daughter's safety, accompanied his answer to her application for money by an order to the same effect: he also wrote to the Marchioness, expressing his gratitude for her protection of his daughter, and requesting a continuance of it, until he should have it in his power to

thank her in person; which he said he hoped soon to do, as he now purposed visiting Montpelier, in order to conduct the young ladies home himself. Miss Tracey, whose indignation against the Marchioness was as short-lived as her contrition, submitted to this arrangement without murmuring: for the Marchioness, sensible that she had rather trespassed the rules of hospitality towards her, and subdued by her extreme agitation, as well as the candid apology which she made for herself, when the first tumult of passion was past, had expressed her regret in the politest terms for having occasioned her so much uneasiness: and Fanny, easily mollified, soon forgot both the cold contempt which had so violently offended her, and the reproof it conveyed. It was now the middle of summer; and one of the most delightful seasons that had ever gilded this mild and salutary climate. It was somewhat hotter than at Paris; but it

was a pure and genial warmth, causing none of that oppressive languor which hangs upon other countries, where the heat is more partially diffused. The air was soft and reviving, like the blue cloudless concave by which it was confined; and the light spirits of cheerfulness and health seemed to wanton among the surrounding scenery, which glowed with the united treasures of Flora and Pomona. Adonia felt the influence of this delightful season, and roses of health and animation once more visited her cheek. The Marchioness rejoiced in this favourable change; but she was now devoured by new inquietudes: she was well acquainted with the turbulence and ferocity of a Parisian mob; and, knowing her husband's indignant and revengeful impetuosity, she daily trembled with the anticipated horror of hearing that he had embroiled himself with some of the contending factions,—perhaps become their slaughtered victim! But her own reason

was, she thought, sufficient for her self-support; and she confined these apprehensions to her own bosom, while she knew that complaint could not remedy them. She became, however, extremely anxious for Admiral Tracey's arrival; as she was resolved, if the accounts from Paris continued equally unfavourable, to set out thither as soon as she had disposed of her young charge, notwithstanding the Marquis's injunctions to the contrary. Adonia was so much recovered, that *her* health was no longer an object of solicitude; and D'Orville, having concluded the business satisfactorily which brought him to Montpelier, was meditating a journey to England with St. Loudon and Lord Arunville, (whom illness had detained at Montpelier, in spite of his determination to quit it,) when Admiral Tracey's arrival was announced within a fortnight from the date of his letter.—D'Orville happened to be on a morning-visit at the Marchioness's at the moment

of

of his arrival there; and, when the first tumults of Fanny's joy had subsided, (which on such occasions were always in the extreme,) and the usual forms of salutation and introduction had given way to general conversation, his attention was particularly arrested by the countenance of this veteran-stranger; which he seemed to examine with the anxiety of one who endeavours to trace some doubtful, yet interesting, resemblance.

Admiral Tracey was a man who had passed the meridian of life; and the traces of manly beauty, though considerably impaired by time and the hardships of a sea-faring life, were still conspicuous on his features. His countenance was strongly expressive of honesty: it was open as noon-day; one that seemed to discover every motion of his heart, and in which might be read great practical benevolence; yet it was furrowed by the deep lines of a hasty, though not a fretful, temper,

temper, to which his tall, corpulent, and commanding, figure bore a degree of affinity that was contradicted again by the expression of cheerfulness and good humour of his dark sparkling eyes. His appearance was altogether such as could not fail to attract the notice of a speculative physiognomist. There was character in his every gesture; and, without any studied style of speech or manner, his air was dignified, and bespoke the gentleman; his words too, happily appropriate to whatever idea they were intended to convey, went directly and forcibly to the heart. "You and I ought to be known to each other," said he to Monsieur d'Orville, observing the attention with which he surveyed him. "There seems to be some secret intelligence between us, which recalls the days of other years; and yet, for my soul! I cannot give it shape or positive locality! It is strange!" replied d'Orville, musing:—"the sound of your voice, your very name,

name, is familiar to my ear; and yet I cannot remember whether we ever met before or not!" "Your name, however, is not familiar to me," said the Admiral; "or there are, perhaps, other circumstances about you which might enlighten us both. However," added he, cordially shaking him by the hand, "if the belief of a former acquaintance will assist our mutual good-will now, I shall be happy to give it full credit." A quick change of colour was instantly visible on Monsieur d'Orville's countenance: it proceeded from two causes; he was touched by the native feeling which characterized this little compliment, coming, as it did, warm from an unsuspicious and congenial heart, and still more affected by the allusion to his change of name. That of D'Orville a fatal necessity had obliged him to adopt; and on the circumstance whence this change had originated hung the first link of all the misfortunes which had attended him through life. He was an

an unfortunate and persecuted brother of the late Lord Stavordale's wife! (she who was the mother of that son whom Lord Stavordale's dying words had discovered to Mrs. Fitzwilliam.) Persecuted for his sister's imprudence in allowing the addresses of a man who was greatly her superior in birth, and driven to take refuge in America from the unjust and implacable revenge of his haughty persecutor, the Earl of Wallingford, he had there entered into marriage with a French woman.— Adopting her name, he ventured back to England after a lapse of some years; but, again discovered and driven thence, he had settled in Paris among his wife's relations, pursuing the business of his profession as a physician. Though once intimate with, and warmly attached to, Lord Stavordale, he had never seen nor heard from him since their first parting, (previous to the latter's elopement with his sister;) yet, though those who had most endeared his native country to him were now forgotten

gotten in the grave, or lost to memory; and though, in the earlier part of his life, when indigent and dependent, he had twice been forced to fly from Lord Wallingford's proud resentment; he was now in circumstances which placed him above the reach of such oppression: in espousing, therefore, the interests of young St. Loudon, he had embraced the idea of accompanying him at some future time to England with the natural eagerness of a man who cherishes the enthusiastic partiality inseparable from a lover of his country, in spite of the circumstances which have destroyed or suppressed the ties of domestic union.—"As a brother Englishman," said he, replying to Admiral Tracey, "you would have a right to my good will; but towards you, methinks, I could form it on another basis than either that or the vague memory of former acquaintance!" "There are some candid and congenial souls," said the Marchioness, "who are all of one country,

try, beneath whatever sky they may happen to have been born: they recognise each other at once, in whatever climate they chance to meet; and, by their mutual recognition, they do honor to the sculpture of nature, who has chisseled out features for them which cannot be mistaken:—yet I own, (such is the force of certain prejudices,) I almost lament to hear that Monsieur d'Orville is not a Frenchman!"—D'Orville bowed with a diffidence that seemed doubtful whether or not to appropriate a compliment which from the Marchioness was at once so flattering and unexpected:—"But how comes it," continued she, "that your name is French? Perhaps your parents were of this country, and we may still call you originally ours?" "Domestic misfortunes, madame, are my only ties in regard to France," replied d'Orville; "excepting the gratitude and esteem which bind me to those of its inhabitants who have honored me with their friendship.

ship. My parents were also natives of England."—"And your original name?" interrupted Admiral Tracey with eagerness——"Was Stanhope!" he replied.—A flush of joy and astonishment suffused Admiral Tracey's countenance. He rose, retired a few paces, returned again, and re-examined his features; then, seizing both his hands, "It is indeed the very same!—the son of my honest worthy friend, Stanhope, the juvenile companion of poor Stavordale!—Stanhope, this is like the unexpected and rushing junction of two long-separated waters of the same fountain! Who would have thought of our meeting here, my boy, after all our wide meanderings!" Again and again he cordially embraced him with expressions of the wildest happiness, such as are only peculiar to those unadulterated and rare hearts which retain through life, with the warmth of juvenile feeling, those sympathies which endear every thing connected with the friends or the scenes of their youth.

youth. D'Orville's pleasure was not inferior; but his expression of it was different; suitable to the different scenes of life through which he had passed since the time when he remembered Tracey, then only rising in his profession, the frequent visitor and companion of his departed father, the pleased encomiast of the opening virtues and beauties of his now-lost sister! Fond, but mournful, recollections mingled with his joy in meeting his venerable friend; and he answered to his rapid and lively expressions of pleasure only by pensive and heart-touching smiles, the meaning of which words could not more forciby have explained. Their attention was next called to Miss Fitzwilliam, who, on learning that the Monsieur d'Orville, whom she had so highly respected when known to her only as a foreigner and a stranger, was the friend and near connection of her mother's favourite relation, Lord Stavordale, flew to salute and acknowledge him

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as such, with all the graceful energy which characterized her manners, as yet unrestrained by the formality of artificial reserve. Adonia partook of her cousin's pleasure: and St. Loudon's presence alone was wanting to complete the general joy, though no one suspected how intimately he was connected with its cause. It was not long until he joined them. Impressed with the melancholy prospect of a perhaps-last separation from Adonia, the object of his heart's warmest preference, he had declined accompanying his friend in this visit, with the design of weaning himself by degrees from her beloved society, too soon to be renounced! but he had found the moments so tedious when left to solitude and reflection, and the idea became so persuasive that a very short time must render it immaterial whether these moments were enjoyed with Adonia or wasted in vain efforts of philosophy, that he had at length determined to choose that which would at least afford him the present consolation

solation of being near her; and he entered the room where the friendly circle were assembled, with a countenance on which a forced and overstrained gaiety served but to picture more strongly the internal struggles of his mind. "I thought you were never coming!" said Adonia softly, as he seated himself beside her, after having conversed a few moments with each of the party. "I almost feared that you were meditating to leave Montpelier without bidding us farewell. It is painful to part from one's friends, and yet I think it is some consolation afterward to have the power of repeating to one's self, 'my friend said this when we parted,'—or 'my friend looked thus.'—"But, if you speak thus now," said St. Loudon with an agonizing smile, "you will deprive me of the future consolation which you describe, by rendering me incapable of purchasing it. Who can hear such flattering words, and bear to part?" Adonia blushed and smiled; and a secret

ray

ray of pleasure illumined St. Loudon's desponding mind, when their attention was forcibly withdrawn by a loud exclamation from Admiral Tracey, who, from the moment of St. Loudon's first entrance, had been alternately regarding him and conversing apart with Monsieur d'Orville. He now rose hastily from his seat, and in the same instant D'Orville sprang from his, and rushed into St. Loudon's arms.—"My nephew! my beloved nephew!" were the only words he had power to utter. Astonishment and anxious interest suspended the inquiries of curiosity, which Admiral Tracey seemed equally incapable of satisfying from excess of benevolent sympathy.—"He needed not birth to ennoble him!" cried D'Orville, at length addressing the Marchioness with an air of proud exultation; "his mind was noble in obscurity; yet I am proud to announce him as the son of Lord Stavordale, the Earl of Wallingford's grandson, and his

lineal heir!" Adonia had never deemed the obscurity of St. Loudon's birth as in the smallest degree derogating from his claims to her favor. She was unconscious how very deeply his future happiness or misery were connected with herself; nor had she once dreamed that her regard for him included any other sentiment than esteem: yet these words thrilled her heart with indescribable sensations of exultation and inquietude; the first arising from the joy of hearing him applauded as worthy of holding a distinguished rank in society;—the latter excited by a sudden apprehension of being forgotten by him, when, surrounded by noble friends and the splendid distinctions of rank and fortune, he might no longer stand in need of her friendship, or be flattered by her notice.—These crowding ideas were not formed into thought; but they agitated her bosom with rapid and irrepressible emotion; and, when he received the congratulations of the

the rest of the party, (while Johanna gracefully saluted him as her relation, and Miss Tracey gaily told him how well he would become a coronet,) she, far otherwise affected, sat pale and motionless, till at length, fearful of betraying the tumults of her mind, she rose abruptly from her seat, and glided out of the room, without daring to utter a word. The Marchioness secretly, and with pleasure, penetrated the causes of this singularity; but Ferdinand saw it with other eyes, and despondency instantly overshadowed the bright ideas which had taken possession of his mind. The highest circumstances of rank or fortune appeared in that moment insignificant without the hope of Adonia's partaking them with him; and he fancied he saw in her abrupt departure, at this season of general congratulation, the fullest confirmation of her once-suspected indifference. Admiral Tracey was all rapture and rejoicing.—He had that universal, per-

haps indiscriminating, kindness of heart which shares in the prosperity of all mankind; and, where the unexpected good fortune of any of *his friends* was the subject of rejoicing, *his* was as sincere as if he himself were the object of fortune's partiality; and his sense of its advantages even more lively than his own rectified and moderate wishes would have taught him to feel in regard to what respected only himself. But his eagerness to confirm the good fortune of those in whom he was interested sometimes led him to give confirmation to circumstances supported by very slender authority; and, though, in the present instance, he was justified in declaring St. Loudon to be the son of Lord Stavordale, he was very far from being in possession of any proof which could authenticate his birth in the eyes of the world. When he heard all the particulars of the Comte de l'Avignon's mysterious conduct, he foresaw that many

obstacles

obstacles would still intervene before Ferdinand could expect to benefit by the discovery which they had just made; and, after some consultation with the Marchioness and D'Orville, it was judged proper that he should defer taking any steps towards an union with his father's family, until they had examined the casket, and confronted the Comte de l'Avignon.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

A GENERAL alteration now took place in regard to their travelling plans. Admiral Tracey proposed accompanying D'Orville and Ferdinand to Paris, in order to substantiate the proofs of the latter's birth. The Marchioness determined to wait at Montpelier the result of their inquiries in regard to political affairs; and easily prevailed on Johanna to remain with her; while Fanny, allured by the gaieties and splendor which she had

had so often heard ascribed to that region of dissipation, never ceased importuning her father until he had consented to admit her of the party destined to Paris, where they were afterwards to be joined, and accompanied to England, by Johanna. The contents of the casket, which will be mentioned more fully hereafter, clearly corroborated Admiral Tracey's evidence.—Besides stating the particulars of his son's birth, and the reasons for entrusting him to De l'Avignon's guardianship, Lord Stavordale had deposited in the casket a picture of him; which, though merely an infantine portrait, was marked by a sufficient resemblance of Ferdinand to be admitted as presumptive evidence; and round the circle of the gold frame was the following inscription, in small and almost-imperceptible letters: "The portrait of Ferdinand St. Loudon, otherwise Conway,—Lord Stavordale's lawful son by A. Stanhope." In mentioning this circumstance in his narrative,

Lord Stavordale concluded with these remarkable words, written in the bitterness of resentment for those persecutions of his family which had driven him to desert his child among strangers.—"As I have found by fatal experience that self-interest is the ruling principle of man; as I have lost my confidence in every bond of faith, every promise of friendship, which can come in competition with it; I have caused the portrait to bear this inscription, that Ferdinand may be able to recognize *himself* as my son; and that *all* who have known Ferdinand *St. Loudon* may be able to bear testimony to him as Ferdinand *Conway*, should the faith of *one man* fail, whom necessity compels me to trust!" The whole testimony of this narrative left no doubt of St. Loudon's identity as the son alluded to by Lord Stavordale; and Admiral Tracey and D'Orville became doubly impatient to realize his claims.

Every

Every thing was put in readiness for their departure with the utmost expedition; and the following morning St. Loudon bid adieu to Adonia, without having either availed himself of the new brilliancy of his prospects, as an authority to make known to her the sentiments with which he regarded her, or having gained the smallest farther insight of hers.—The former he did not yet think himself sufficiently entitled to build upon; and his hopes, restrained by the diffidence and delicacy of his love, were too feeble to be immediately flattered by the observations which he had momentarily made upon her emotion when the unexpected discovery had caused such a favorable reverse of his lately-clouded prospects.—Adonia saw him depart with the most lively sensations of doubt and regret: she could not find a satisfactory reason for wishing to hide her dejection, and yet she felt an irresistible repugnance to the idea of its being remarked by the Marchioness or

Johanna. In spite of her precautions, however, some tears started in her eyes at the moment when he turned away from her: she strove to ascribe them to another cause; and, looking after the Admiral's carriage, which just then drove from the door, she faltered out,—"Poor Fanny!" but, instantly conscious of the deceit, and ashamed of having used it, she glanced a timid and blushing look at the Marchioness, who had already translated her "poor Fanny!" into its proper language. "Are you sorry to part with Miss Tracey, my love?" said she, with a scrutinizing look, which seemed destined to read her inmost thoughts; but Adonia could not answer it: her tears burst forth without controul, and she hastened to hide them in her own apartment.—"Sweet girl!" said the Marchioness mentally,—"her heart is indeed touched, but I will not distress her by remarking it farther to herself.—If Ferdinand really loves and is worthy of her, he will quickly return to

to improve her flattering preference of him; if not, her proper pride will enable her to overcome it; and affairs of this kind are best left to the self-jurisdiction of a mind so well regulated as hers." A very short time afterwards she was surprised by seeing Adonia return to the drawing-room, not merely composed, but with an air of more than her usual cheerfulness, though it was not difficult upon investigation to penetrate this deceit. In order to do away the impression which her tears might have made, as well as to conquer the new and alarming feelings which oppressed her, she assumed a degree of gaiety that her heart had very long been unacquainted with. She seemed almost to have changed characters with Miss Tracey, talked rapidly and sportively on the most uninteresting topics, and played on her piano-forte the liveliest airs she could select; while now and then a truant tear, which she always contrived to rally back before it could reach her

cheek, glistened unbidden in her eye. The Marchioness pitied, but secretly applauded, her exertions; and Johanna, as ignorant as herself of the real nature of her feelings, rejoiced in her apparent gaiety, and stimulated it by her own.

The travellers had not been many hours gone, when Lord Arunville, who had altered his design of accompanying St. Loudon and D'Orville from the change which had taken place in *their* plans, sent up his name, and desired to be admitted to pay his respects to the Marchioness. She was now too well acquainted with the extent of his unfortunate attachment to Adonia to approve of any conduct that was calculated to feed the hopeless prepossession, and she was distressed by the request; though, knowing that he must have heard from her servants that she was not from home, she could not now refuse him admittance. Adonia, by her desire, however, instantly withdrew. It was the first visit he had paid

paid them since his illness, which was dangerous and severe; occasioned equally by agitation of mind and the dissipated course of life he had been engaged in for some time previous to his arrival at Montpelier. Ill as he had looked when they first saw him, the Marchioness and Miss Fitzwilliam were shocked to observe the still-greater alteration in his appearance since their last meeting. His eyes were robbed of all their fire; his visage pale and sunken; and his figure so emaciated, that he seemed hardly able to support himself as he slowly entered the room. His mind partook of the feebleness of his body; and his manner of conversing, which formerly was always energetic, whatever might be the topic, now evinced only wandering and languor of thought. He frequently looked towards the door, as if in expectation of Adonia's entrance; but he made no other remark on her absence than to hope that she was not indisposed; and, being satisfied

tisfied in this particular by the Marchioness, who plainly shewed by the style of her reply that she approved of her absence, he did not mention her again, but directed his chief attention and conversation to Johanna. There was something uncommonly touching in the plaintive resignation with which he now seemed disposed to yield to a destiny against which he had once so violently revolted. Passion seemed subdued; but it was supplanted by a deep and settled melancholy; which, shading a character naturally vivacious and sanguine, and a face whose eloquent lines strongly spoke every emotion of his heart, irresistibly engaged the sympathy of his auditors; and even the Marchioness seemed to interest herself in the romantic strain of his discourse. They had sat some time conversing pensively on general topics, in that oblique way by which feeling sometimes at once affects to hide, and wishes to expose, the real subject which occupies it, when the Marchioness,

ness, in order to give a new turn to the conversation, requested Johanna to shew Lord Arunville a little English poem which she had read to her some days before.—It was in unison with their feelings, yet calculated to introduce new images, and the Marchioness was perfectly acquainted with the means of soothing a pensive turn of thought, without flattering its delusions. Johanna blushed, for it was a composition of her own; but, knowing that the Marchioness was ignorant of this, on her repeating the request, she brought it to them.—It ran thus:

A CURATE'S TALE.

I AM not skill'd in polish'd phrase
To decorate my tale;
And nature's eloquence decays
In life's declining vale.

And,

And, ah! how little is there here
 To grace a poet's song,
Were life disclos'd in words sincere,
 And cheating fancy gone!

Alas! the promises of youth
 Are dipp'd in fancy's dies;
And soon the season comes when truth
 Declares them gaudy lies:

But not till weaken'd reason loves
 The dangerous deceit!—
But not till feeling *real* proves
 The *anguish* of the cheat!

Mine was an humble pastor's lot:
 My little flock were poor;
And barren was the scanty spot
 Before the Curate's door:

But soon I trimm'd the scanty green,
 And till'd the barren soil;
And soon were peace and comfort seen
 Before my door to smile;

For, young and vigorous was I,
 My wishes were my own;
I had not learnt for wealth to sigh
 Which I had never known.

But brightly burnt my social fire;
 Gay smil'd my garden green;
And I could ne'er enough admire
 My flow'rs, where weeds had been:

And

And dearer did I joy to trace,
(My simple flock among,)
How in the ways of truth and grace
The feeble hearts grew strong.

Each morn our suppliant hands we rais'd
To be by virtue blest;
Each eve our Maker's name we prais'd,
And, happy, sunk to rest!

My wife was gentle, good, and kind;
Three cherub-babes she gave;
Then fate my faithful love consign'd
To the unsocial grave!

O gloomy, gloomy, now was seen
The home she us'd to cheer!
I could not trim our garden green
When she no more was near:

I could not toil, with ardor fraught,
T'increase our little store;
Since she, my sweet reward who brought,
Could give her thanks no more!

At length religion stemm'd the tide
Of nature's bitter woe;—
"In innocence thy partner died,
Then why lament her so?"

I thought upon that happy scene
Where we should meet again;
And "Life," I said, "was but a dream
Of fleeting bliss and pain."

I thought upon the babes we lov'd ;—
So like their mother dear !
Their artless smiles my grief reprov'd ;
I dried a ling'ring tear :—

" And now, my children," did I say,
" I'll smile and toil again !
'He giveth and he takes away,'—
And grief is wrong and vain !"

The lovely babes, so gay and fair,
My Primroses I call :
And sure did never vernal air
On sweeter flowrets fall!

But death again his weapon tried
To cloud my op'ning joys ;—
He spar'd my girl, my garden's pride,
But took my blooming boys.

Here too I conquer'd : " Happy they
Who find an early tomb !
Their life, a sweet and April day !
Their death, eternal bloom !

" Peace to your ashes, cherubs bright !"
I said ; " ye now are blest :
My new-fledg'd birds, your only flight
Was wing'd to heav'nly rest !"

My daughter, now my only care,
To rising goodness grew ;
And those who call'd her passing fair,
In sooth, but call'd her true !

Her

Her courteous manners none could see,
Nor wish my Nancy well;
But dearer was the maid to me
Than words can ever tell.

Some kindred feelings nature bears,
Which will not be represt;
And he, one only child who rears,
Loves her for all the rest!

The single rose that decks his green
Is more the peasant's pride
Than all in artful gardens seen,
Where wealth and plenty bide:

O cruel! from his little hoard
That boasted flow'r to tear!
O base! to share his temp'rate board,
And leave a poison there!

Yet such the cruelty I prov'd;
And such the treach'rous part
Of him, my gentle maid who lov'd,
And stole her guileless heart.

Just sixteen summers had she seen
In innocence and peace;
And every charm of gay sixteen
Gave sweetness to her face:

In song, in dance, in frolic-glee,
None could with her compare;
An ever-dimpling cheek had she,
And spirits light as air!

The song, the dance, the jest, went round,
  As wont, at close of day;
But my sweet songstress was not found
  To share the harmless play!

At morn, the peasants all repair
  Their wonted toils to ply;—
Each father had his darling there,
  Save poor deserted I!

Three tedious weeks my child I sought,
  But sought her still in vain;
" O thou ungrateful one!"—I thought,
  " To give thy father pain!"

" Who loves thee with such tender love!"—
  O righteous heav'n she came!
With rapt'rous silence long I strove,
  And thought no more of blame.

I held her fondly in my arms,
  And bade her nothing fear;
And lightly talk'd of past alarms,
  Since she again was near.

But, ah! no answ'ring smile she gave;
  In tears her cheek was drest;
I strove her penitence to save,
  And chidings were supprest:

Still, still, her tears incessant fell,
  And silent was her tongue!
And nothing could her tremors quell,
  Though round me still she hung!

" O weep

"O weep not, love! but join with me
To thank thy heav'nly guide,
Whose guardian-arm has shelter'd thee
From perils past!" I cried.

Then first in agony she wrung
Her hands so pale and cold;
And, with a faint and falt'ring tongue,
The dreadful tidings told:

Oh! now I mark'd her alter'd mien,
Her dim and hollow eye:—
Seduc'd, abandon'd, she had been!
And but return'd—to die!

I knew her will, to virtue true,
Could never merit blame;
And art refin'd alone, I knew,
Had brought my child to shame.

And soon I hush'd my anger wild,
My sorrow's fruitless moan;
And strove to sooth my ruin'd child
For peace and comfort gone!

But nothing that my love could try
Avail'd her breast to cheer;
She shrunk, abash'd, from ev'ry eye;
She dreaded still to hear,

From ev'ry greeting tongue, some word
That hinted her disgrace;
And nothing, nothing, could afford
The wretched suff'rer peace!

And

And next disease the victim seiz'd;
All human aid was vain:
Yet still chastising heav'n was pleas'd
To lengthen out her pain.

Stretch'd on the bed of slow decay,
My child, so blithe of late,
Saw life's gay morning fade away,
Nor murmur'd once at fate.

The lips, that seem'd but form'd to smile,
Now woe's composure drest;
The heart, that knew nor care nor guile,
Now *one* sad thought possest:

That thought was death, and death arriv'd:—
My sweetest *Primrose* fell!
Oh! wherefore, wherefore, have I liv'd
My darling's death to tell!

The storm, which all its saplings tore,
Has spar'd the aged tree;
And never, fortune, canst thou more
Inflict a pang on me!

I have my Nancy's grassy tomb
With flowrets fair inlaid;
I watch them, as like her they bloom;
Like her I see them fade:

And still, as spring renews again
Their colours fresh and gay;
And still, as winter strips the plain,
And bids their sweets decay;

I joy

I joy to find another year
  Of sad probation o'er!
And if weak nature drops a tear,
  To joys that are no more,

By faith inspir'd I fervent give
  To seraph Hope the wing,
And see my *sweetest Primrose* live
  In everlasting spring!

Johanna had declined officiating as reader, from the natural timidity of a young votary of the muses who fears detection, uncertain whether she may merit applause or condemnation: and the Marchioness, who had taken this task upon herself, gave every advantage to the vein of simple feelings which was its chief characteristic, and which was rather heightened by the slight degree of French accent with which she read the language. Lord Arunville listened with an abstracted and thoughtful air: once or twice his colour slightly varied; and, at the passage which describes poor Nancy's resignation in death, a tear stole slowly down his

his cheek: but he made few comments on the poem, and shortly afterwards took his leave, though not without something unusual in his manner.

Next morning the Marchioness was surprised with the news that he had quitted Montpelier at break of day; and the servant, whom he had left behind to follow with his baggage, brought her a letter from him; out of which, after having slightly run it over, she read the following passage aloud to Johanna:—"To you, who cannot be ignorant of the fatal weakness which unnerves my mind, I need not explain my own peculiar suffering at this moment, after having formed the resolution of leaving Montpelier without seeing any part of your family again; and I have only to apologize for the abruptness of my departure this morning, and to entreat that you will believe my assurance, that no time nor absence can ever efface from my breast the sentiments of

of gratitude and esteem, you have impressed on it. Amid the consciousness which I cannot help feeling, that I have lately acted a part unworthy of myself, in sinking beneath a weakness which honor condemns, the reflection that you honor me with your friendship supports me, and in some measure reconciles me to myself; for the last hold which self-love allows us to relinquish is, that we are still esteemed by those whose sentiments and conduct we approve; while, sensible that we acknowledge and admire their excellence, we continue to hope that we may one day imitate them, the belief of possessing whose regard is the best incentive to meriting it. Called upon to act a part in society which my means might enable me to render useful to others, I have long felt only for myself. How degrading is the alternative to which I have submitted!—for I will not say that it was chosen;—it was involuntary. But I mean not to recur to a subject

ject which I have at length determined to banish for ever! Tell Miss Fitzwilliam that I am going in quest of her poor curate, or one like him. I will search out the children of poverty and affliction, and, in relieving their distresses, seek a balsam of my own. This is no momentary flight of Quixotism. I have long contemplated, with an eye of self-accusation, that thoughtless and unprofitable career which young men of my own rank in life pursue from the mere influence of habit and accidental circumstance. With the feelings of humanity in our bosoms, and the means of relieving the necessitous in our purses, bred up in the luxuries and arrogance of prosperity, we are accustomed to view the miseries of life as belonging to a sphere which borders not upon our own, and into which it concerns us little to inquire. If we think of them at all, we repress our involuntary desire of assisting, to redress them with the common and ill-applied maxim, that the

the poor are reconciled by custom to their poverty, and the wretched to their misfortunes. What mean and empty sophistry! when, if we look a little farther, we find all men equally susceptible of happiness; and see, held up to the daily view of the unfortunate, the mortifying contrast between prosperity and adversity. But our feelings are perverted rather by false refinements of education than the sophistries of reason. We are taught from our earliest youth to annex an importance to *sentiment* which belongs properly to *feeling*; to adopt the specious principles of modern honor in lieu of the unborrowed integrity of nature; to prefer the elegancies of fashionable manners before the proprieties of moral conduct; and we become naturalized to these mistakes, which we find so acceptable in society, before the mind has acquired sufficient vigor to examine or reject them. We become the Athenians, who contented themselves with talking eloquently of virtue, and not the Spartans,

 who

who thought it more proper to practise it. —"It is true," said Themistocles to the Athenians, who ridiculed his ignorance of their false refinements, "it is true, that I never learned to tune a lyre, or play upon a lute; but I know how to raise a poor and inconsiderable city to greatness and to glory!" Who would not rather be the rude Themistocles than his effeminate countrymen who derided him! You will smile to hear *me* speak a language which condemns Athenian refinement. In the words of the amiable and discerning Zimmerman, you will exclaim, "How virtuous, alas! do we all become under the pressure of calamity!" but you will not pursue his train of reasoning any farther, nor believe that I will fly to *solitude* to cherish the *social* affections. No! I do not mean to seek repose in solitude: the society of ourselves is more dangerous and relaxing, under the pressure of affliction, than any other; but I will associate with wretchedness; and, in sym-

pathising

pathising with others, learn to withdraw from myself. I am going to England; for what good we *can* do ought first to be given to our native country. When I have harmonised my jarring passions, by the reflection that I have made some few beings happy, though for ever estranged from happiness myself, I shall return to Paris,—for what purpose I need not tell you; and hope then again to see you well and happy, in spite of the commotions which now wear such a threatening aspect among your countrymen. I would fain ask you to write to me.—No! do not, do not, write! You must suffer me to forget you for a while, if I can! Let the world seem a desert to me; let it be as the wreck of the universal deluge! I will leave no spray for the bird of Hope to settle on. No olive-branch shall the restless wanderer bring to me, to seem like the symbol of peace and rest; but be in reality a brand to keep alive internal discord!—God bless you!—God bless you all!"

"He is then gone!" said Johanna falteringly.—"Do not, I beseech you, my dear Marchioness, tell Adonia how unhappy he is: she would never forgive herself for having caused it. Ah! if any man deserves happiness it is Lord Arunville!" A deep sigh and an involuntary tear, given to the memory of his goodness and his sorrows, followed these words. Johanna's heart was the abode of genuine pity, not of romantic sentiment; she knew Lord Arunville's engagements, and his love for Adonia: she dreamed not of impossibilities, yet "was he not," she thought, "the most interesting man she had ever seen?"

CHAP. XXVIII.

"Qu'il est dur de haïr ceux qu'on vouloit aimer!"

JOHANNA invited Adonia to walk with her; and, perhaps without intending it, they took the road which led to ——, by which route Lord Arunville was supposed to have travelled. They had proceeded almost a mile from town, when the day grew sultry, and the sun, rising to its meridian, warned them to seek the shade. They crossed the road, and soon found themselves in a grove of lofty trees, where the hand of industrious neatness had conducted a narrow but convenient foot-path towards a small row of cottages at some distance. Before the doors a group of peasants were assembled, apparently to celebrate some rustic festival.

 The

The sounds of merriment were heard, and tables were spread out, covered with a variety of fruits and the light wines of the country, with which the peasantry there are accustomed to regale themselves on occasions like these.—" Shall we join them?" said Johanna; " the people here are civil and communicative; and I think there is amusement in listening to the prattle of unrefined nature, when it is not too boisterous." " Well, we have Armaud with us," said Adonia; " I think *his* appearance will be sufficient to repress any thing of the boisterous they may have about them. I am besides quite fatigued, and long to rest myself on that nice vine-tree *accoudoir*, it peeps forth so invitingly from the cluster of elms." " Come on!" replied Johanna with apparent gaiety; " there is something infectious in their merriment; and," added she, with a deep sigh and an increasing colour, " I have almost forgotten Lord Arunville already!" The peasants all arose at their approach; their merriment was discontinued

discontinued to give place to the embarrassed courtesy of awkward respect; which, when the young ladies perceived, they almost repented the interruption they had given them; and endeavoured with the utmost sweetness and affability to invite back the ease and hilarity they had unintentionally disturbed. They entreated that they would resume their seats, and not give them cause to consider themselves intruders. "We only wished to ask your leave to rest ourselves beneath these elms," said Adonia, with unaffected humility of tone; "and it concerns us to see that our presence puts a stop to the gaiety which it gave us much pleasure to witness.—I assure you we like to hear your pipe and tabor; it is the best music which Languedoc can boast,—the unison of health and cheerfulness." An old man now accosted them; he was the very figure of benignity. With an air of honest freedom, tempered by respect, he invited them into his cottage, which, being but a little distance from the rest, would, he

said,

said, afford a good view of the villagers without discomposing them, and they might there repose themselves from the heat of the sun. They hesitated; they wished to withdraw entirely from the scene they had disturbed; but there was a sincerity in the old man's kindness which they were also unwilling to wound, and they suffered him to conduct them to his habitation. He seated them by an open lattice, where the jessamine and eglantines, clustering round it, diffused a refreshing fragrance through the neat white-walled apartment, (which was the best in the hamlet, and only open on holidays,) that perfectly enchanted them. The old man having rung a little bell, that stood on the smooth round table which graced the middle of the room, a young girl about seventeen entered, whom he directed to bring such refreshment as the house afforded, to set before his guests. In a few minutes she returned with some excellent grapes of different kinds, and peaches, the rich colours of which could be rivaled

rivaled only by the blushing cheeks of the beautiful brunette who presented them. Though sinking beneath the confusion of bashfulness, there was a native elegance in this girl's movements which astonished her young guests, and a gentle courtesy in her address when she pressed them to eat, such as they had no expectation of finding in an inhabitant of these lowly hamlets. Indeed the air of every thing around them was calculated to create admiration and surprise in the bosoms of those who were better acquainted than they were with the peasantry of Languedoc.—The gay verdure of the hamlet-green; the luxuriancy of the neighbouring vineyard, which was now empurpled with the bending fruits of autumn; the stately elms, which threw a spacious shade over the place where the villagers, again assembled, were yielding their light hearts to mirth and music; the distant vibrations of this music, which, if it was not

 modulated

modulated by the most perfect execution, was sufficient to awaken the hearts of its simple auditors to cheerfulness the most unalloyed; the numerous birds which flitted from tree to tree, joining their various notes with the rustic concert beneath them; the clear cloudless sky; the loaded fragrance of the air, which seemed a balsam to every sense; but, above all, the venerable and interesting appearance of the old man who was the free commoner of all these sweets, and the singular beauty of his grandchild, who seemed only to watch his wishes that she might obey them;—formed a combination of gay and touching images, which dissolved the hearts of the two fair visitors in rapturous and romantic delight! For some time they contemplated them in luxurious silence. To Adonia, bred up—(except in the years of infancy,—those happy years which only leave to memory a deep impression of their cloudless serenity, but not of the images which nursed it,)—to Adonia,

Adonia, bred up in Paris, where the poor imitate the vices of the rich, and reap the miseries of vice without the alleviations of luxury, a scene like this was altogether new. The enthusiasm of a warm and benevolent nature was raised to its highest pitch; and, dissolved in tears, she could not forbear pressing the old man's hand, and exclaiming, "May you be always thus happy!" He smiled, and shook his head. "This is a holiday!" said he emphatically; "but we have indeed reason to be contented.—I was born here, young lady," continued he: "I have lived to see my children's children grow up, good and happy, around me; and here, among them, I hope to end my days, without having to look back upon any misfortune but what is the everyday lot of other men, or any crime that need make me tremble in the hour of death. My Annette here (pointing to the girl who stood by him) is my nurse; and she, sweet love, will take care that her

her grandfather's eyes are closed in peace!" "Oh! who would be the hard-hearted wretch to distress your closing hours!" exclaimed Adonia, while a sweet glow overspread her features. "Who would not delight to watch over so much goodness and contentment!" "It is my pride," said the old man, "and I hope it is no vain boast, that I have never injured any one so that I need fear injury; but there are villains in the world (and his colour kindled as he spoke) who can requite kindness with infamy! There are those who would seek to bring to shame that innocent girl, and rob me of the darling of my age!" "Villains indeed!" exclaimed Johanna, fixing her eyes on Annette's blushing face. "Who could ever seek to spoil that cheek of its blush of innocence!"—"It could be no peasant," said Adonia. "Some titled seducer I fear." "Yes, he wore the gaudy trappings of rank," replied the old man. "It was only a few days ago, that, as our young folks

folks were preparing to go to the fields, a stranger on his way to Montpelier stopped to ask some questions concerning the owner of yonder chateau. He had left his equipage at a distance, and was attended by two servants in gay liveries. My Annette was on the green, such as you see her: she soon caught his eye; and, when I had answered all his questions, he still loitered about, and contrived to detain us with trifling talk. At last he complained of being thirsty; and I, suspecting no harm from one of his appearance, (for he was a fine handsome young man, and I dare say has made many a fine lady's heart ache,) invited him in, to taste what my little cottage would afford.—He eagerly accepted my offer, and was profuse of his acknowledgements,—aye, and of his money too, a base-minded villain! He thought to buy our honor with his treacherous liberality! But I have none of his money now: I threw his purse from me, and trampled it

under my feet, when I heard that he had attempted to corrupt my darling. He staid some time, pretending to be weary; and won upon my unsuspecting heart by praises of my grandchildren, who were playing round me.—I saw that his glances of admiration were still oftener directed to Annette; but he did not seem to forget that she was the child of honesty; and I could not help, in the vanity of my heart, being pleased, and anxious that she should appear to the best advantage before him.—As she had learned to play on the mandoline, I made her perform some of her best tunes. He seemed enchanted with her, and said she played like an angel, though I will warrant he had been accustomed to better music, if I had but reflected so at the time; and when he got up to go away, he looked so sad upon her, the poor girl almost wept. After all, he had a face that might have seduced a more artful heart!" Here poor Annette's cheeks turned pale, and a half-suppressed

sigh

sigh heaved her innocent bosom.—"Thy colour changes, girl!" said the old man sternly.—"Annette, if I thought that sigh pleaded in behalf of a seducer, I would turn thee out, weak as thou art, to earn the bread of poverty alone! No house of mine shall ever shelter a child of infamy!"

"No!" exclaimed Adonia; "Annette but sighs to see you so disturbed; her ingenuous countenance could not hide one improper thought!" She held out her hand to her; Annette with native grace raised it to her lips, and Adonia with surprise felt a warm tear drop upon it. But she affected not to notice her emotion, and begged the old man to proceed with his story. "Yesterday he came again," continued he; "I was from home, and Annette alone, employed in the business of the house; (for she and I live apart from the rest of my children, and we are never both absent at the same time.) He engaged her in conversation; (and the girl does not want sense for her years;)

years;) and, after talking with her some time on other matters, he began to praise her beauty, and lament that charms like hers should be hid in such a rustic place. He wondered that she did not think of going to Montpelier, where there were many ladies of rank who would like to take so fine a girl into their service; and then he said her fortune would be made. He himself, he said, knew an English lady at Montpelier who would make her her waiting-woman on his recommendation, and perhaps take my Annette with her to England, where she would live like a lady herself, and see finer places than she had ever seen in France."—"Was he then an Englishman?" exclaimed Johanna.—"I do not know what country he was of," replied the old man; "but I should have guessed him to be a foreigner by his language." Johanna listened with deeper interest, and the old man continued:—"Annette told him she was perfectly contented with her lot; and, if

if she were even otherwise, no inducement would tempt her to leave her old grandfather, whose nurse she was."—"But he will soon die," said the insidious villain, "and then what will become of you?" "I have then a brother to go to," she said, "and many dear friends, who would make it unnecessary for me to enter into any lady's service for my support; and, indeed, I have no wish beyond the situation heaven has placed me in." "You have then a lover?" said he. She blushed, and but half comprehended him; for, poor thing! she knew little of love, more than merely having been asked in marriage once or twice. But, when he inquired a second time whether there was not *one* among the young peasants whom she preferred before the rest, she frankly answered no!—"Have none of them ever asked you in marriage?" he then said. "With that face and form of yours, it is not possible but that you must have had many lovers!" She declined answering him for some time, but

but, at length, on his urging her farther, she owned that she *had* had offers of the kind.—"And who were the men whom you refused?" he went on: "were they poor or old, that your heart continued thus insensible?" She told him of one who was very rich, and another both young and handsome; but the first, she said, was too old: "and the latter?" he inquired eagerly, "what was your objection to him?" "I do not exactly know," she said, "but I could not like him; he was a harsh-spoken man!" "O Annette!" he said, "your heart was cast in a finer mould! (or some such expression;) "you were formed to love, but not to pass your days among such rustics as these who surround you!" He fixed his eyes upon her when he spoke, (for the poor girl told me all,) and, perceiving that she sighed and turned away from his observation, he drew her towards him, and folded her tenderly in his arms. She disengaged herself hastily, and strove to reproach him,

him, but he repaired his error by a more respectful behaviour; and she was so soft hearted as to continue weeping. At this period I came in upon them; I saw my girl's confusion, but respect for the stranger made me delay my inquiries: and when he had invented an artful story to account for his visit, and I had bidden him welcome, I ventured to inquire the cause of Annette's tears. He answered me with warmth, "that he honored her for them!" and with an appearance of the most perfect honesty related all their conversation; giving the colour of friendship to his wish of procuring for her a better establishment; and explaining her tears, by imputing them to his having started the idea in her bosom of leaving her home, and the friends whom she seemed to love so tenderly. I believed all he said, and thanked him for his good wishes for my child; which I declined, as I told him how ill I could spare her; and we parted quite friendly.

friendly. But he first told me, that he was to leave Montpelier next morning by day-break, and should perhaps never return. He spoke the last words with emphasis, and glanced a look at Annette, who I could see changed colour as he pronounced them; but still I suspected no evil. I wished him all happiness, and he forced me to accept of that purse of money which I told you I had since spurned away from me. "I shall pass your way in the morning," said he, "about the time your family usually go out to the vineyard; should Annette be up then, will she not also wish me well?" This speech I, at the time, scarcely remarked; but it had the effect which he designed. My simple girl rose earlier than usual; she wished to catch a last look of the gay seducer, and she loitered as near as possible to the high road, till she saw him appear. He was alone, and at sight of her he dismounted from his horse, and led

led it towards her, until the narrowness of the path obliged him to stop. He then beckoned her towards him, and pointed to his led horse as the reason of his not advancing farther.—But I fear, ladies, I shall tire you by relating all these trifling particulars. I am an old man, and age they say is talkative, and makes much account of trifles; but, if I tire you, I will endeavour to make my story shorter."—They both entreated him to proceed in his own way, and he continued: "She was rather afraid to obey him. Though she, poor thing! had no evil suspicions of a gentleman like him, she thought that to be seen conversing with such a fine man, all by herself, would have an odd appearance, and she every moment expected that the vine-gatherers would be in view. At length, as he still waited, and solicited her, she ventured to go up to him; though, on finding that he wanted to detain her in idle discourse, she told him frankly her

objections

objections to being seen with him by the labourers; and entreated that he would allow her to retire. He replied, that he could not part with her so soon, for that he had something of great importance to communicate to her,—something of the last consequence to his own life and happiness. Again she objected to the impropriety of remaining with him, especially at so unseasonable an hour.—"I am at all times an early riser," said she, "but this is so much sooner than my usual time of going to the vineyard, that, should any of the neighbours see me here, they would say that I had come purposely to meet with *you*." "And did you not, Annette?" inquired he softly.—"Ah! that blush betrays you!—You have discovered that I love you; and I am convinced, Annette, that you have not an insensible heart.—But this is not what I principally wished to speak of," he continued; (for she now looked alarmed, and attempted to run away from him:) "I am

am sensible of the difference of our situations, and the insurmountable obstacles which fortune has raised to oppose all hope of our being united by marriage, which would otherwise be the object of my most ardent wishes. The subject on which I wished to speak to you is an affair of still greater moment, and less unattainable:—but if you really dare not stay, if you are indeed so apprehensive of me, I must leave it untold, whatever my silence or your obduracy may condemn me to suffer; yet, Annette, I commend your prudence." He went on,—"It is indeed improper that you should be seen with me: it is dangerous for me to remain near you.—I had better say farewell at once, than involve you in any part of my distress, by detaining you when you cannot relieve me!" "Alas!" said my inconsiderate girl, "if you will be quick,—if we could avoid being seen,—" "Are you afraid to trust yourself with me?" said he tenderly; "or will you

venture to accompany me so far as to the road? I have left my servants there; and, when I have given my horse to them, I can return with you to your house, and the presence of your grandfather, who I am equally anxious to speak with, will silence the tongue of slander." Villain that he was! *my* presence was the last in his wishes. As they advanced towards the road, he again praised her beauty, and hinted at his hopeless love: he wished that he either had never seen her, or that he might never again be parted from her; and he wrought upon her so, that at last she burst into tears, and declared that she should never forgive herself for causing him so much uneasiness. They had by this time gained the road, and his servants appeared in view. He called one of them to him, and bade him take charge of his horse; and, when the fellow obeyed him, and retired with it to a little distance, he pressed my girl's hand, and entreated her not to weep.—He then drew out his fine

soft

soft handkerchief, and with his own hand wiped the tears from her cheeks, while he gently drew her closer to him. "I would fain kiss away these precious tears, Annette," said he; "but I dread to offend you.—Yet why should you weep?" he continued, gazing earnestly and eagerly upon her.—"It is in your own power to remedy the evil we lament, and to become mine for ever!—You must! you shall!"

With terrified astonishment she now broke away from his circling arms, for she saw his servants rushing towards her; and in the same moment a carriage, with four horses in it, drew up.—There was now not a moment for doubt or hesitation; the villain's purpose was unveiled, and she fled from him towards the village with incredible swiftness,—a swiftness which only her fears and her innocence could have given her. Though they pressed close upon her, she was met by some of the

the neighbours before they could overtake her; and I received the poor fluttered child in my arms, panting all over like a bird which has just broken away from the fowler's net. The dastardly crew saw that they were no match for our honest vintagers, and prudently withdrew; and we made a holiday to celebrate my darling's escape. But I have scarcely yet been able to reason poor Annette into composure, or make her cease blaming her own imprudence as the cause of all that happened; though, for my part, I have freely forgiven her; for I know the innocence of her heart, and the winning arts of the handsome rascal who thus attempted her destruction. Even I myself was deceived by him, there was something so honest in his countenance, so affecting in the look of sickness and melancholy which he had!" "Of sickness and melancholy?" exclaimed Johanna hastily: "did he look sick and melancholy? and could you not tell me his name?" "No, my

my lady," the old man replied; "he was wise enough to keep his name to himself: but perhaps this paper may inform you, which I found in the field a few days ago, if you know how to read the foreign language it is written in. I have no doubt of its belonging to him, for there has been no other foreigner here for a long time; but I kept it as a rarity to shew the neighbours, being in a language I had never seen before." "Where is it?" cried Johanna eagerly. The old man brought it.—The characters were in many places almost effaced by damp; but they immediately read that it was inscribed "To Adonia," and perceived the hand writing to be that of Lord Arunville!

But how different was the language which it breathed from that of the insiduous deceiver! how inconsistent was the refined passion it described with that in which he had insulted the child of innocence! "This is indeed strange!" ex-

claimed Adonia, as she ran over the paper. "It is impossible!" cried Johanna, with increasing warmth. Again they perused it together. It was as follows:

Ye smiling scenes, where summer loves to rest,
With clust'ring vines and bow'rs of roses twin'd,
Why fail your beauties to content a breast
Which once, in sweets like these, could solace find?

Ah! for *my* summer, clouded by despair,
No fresh'ning dews, no springing hopes, can taste!
Bleak o'er my bosom blows a with'ring air,
And mind, and health, and peace, are all laid waste!

And yet I blame not fortune, curse not fate:
The *gentle maid*, who in my bosom lives,
Too pure to bide with storms, shall ne'er create
One outrag'd thought, tho' she the ruin gives:—

The heart, where *she* enshrined is, shall wear
No rude tumultuous passion—but despair!

"Romantic nonsense!" exclaimed Adonia; "and this from a base seducer? Ah! Johanna, the longer I live in it, the less I love this unfriendly deceitful world! To think that another Comte de l'Avignon should have lain concealed in the disguise of the sensible, the elegant, the insinuating, Lord Arunville! To think that *he* should pretend to love, and to claim

claim compassion for his hopeless sufferings, who was all the time seeking to gratify an ungenerous and unhallowed passion at the expence of innocence and happiness!" "It is impossible!" cried Johanna, thoughtfully; and a tear started in her eye: "those sentiments of pure philanthropy which he uttered could never have been feigned: that impressive melancholy; his broken health, the consequence of wounded feeling; his agonizing struggles to subdue a passion, which he believed not unreturned, when he found it obnoxious to honor; his resolution in tearing himself away from you, Adonia, without even bidding you adieu; his letter to the Marchioness;—good heavens! how many circumstances confute the possibility of the seducer of Annette and Lord Arunville being the same person!" Again they questioned the old man, in regard to every circumstance of his visits to the hamlet; and Annette was called upon to describe his person accurately.

Every relation which she gave confirmed Adonia's suspicions; every trait which Annette described could belong to no other than Lord Arunville. "He was tall," said Annette; "half a head taller than my grandfather!" "And was he thin?" inquired Johanna. "Yes, very thin and pale; but his air was noble: he might have been a prince!" "And wilt thou dare to praise him, girl?" cried the old man sternly: "what was his air to thee?" Annette blushed and trembled. "Ah, father!" said she meekly, with an eye half-averted, "this praise is but his due; but I detest him now!" "One more question," said Johanna, "allow me to ask her; were his eyes large and dark?" "Yes," replied Annette; "they were very dark, and commonly full of melancholy; but when he smiled they seemed to flash fire!" Johanna turned from them, and with difficulty restrained her tears. She had imagined Lord Arunville a demi-god; —he now appeared to her a villain! With what

what anguish does a young and generous heart find itself compelled to relinquish its esteem, its confidence, in those whom it is disposed to love! Johanna tried to withdraw from the subject:—"We will think of him no more!" said she: "he is unworthy even of our regret!" and she forced a smile to Annette, and began to question her upon her amusements and occupations. "I fear we have detained you from a gayer party than we are," said she:—"I should like to see you dance, Annette. That light figure of yours seems made for dancing." "Ah, that it is!" said the old man exultingly; "but you shall see how she performs: I will go and turn her out upon the green, and seek her a partner myself! only tuck up your hair first, child!" Annette's countenance brightened with an expressive smile. She delighted in dancing, and she was not altogether sorry to be permitted to withdraw from a society she had been unused to; her colour heightened, she became

light as air; and, twisting in a careless knot the profusion of dark glossy hair that shaded in wild ringlets her neck and shoulders, she tripped upon the green.—Never was there form of fabled wood-nymph more airy or graceful than that of Annette, although a slight stuff-jacket and petticoat were her best attire; and her delicate feet, loaded with the wooden shoes of the country, could but display half their natural elasticity! Never were there features more finely modelled, nor a countenance more expressive of uncorrupted innocence! nor was the most perfect cheerfulness wanting to complete its native expression. The frolic gaiety of her nature was wont to dimple her sunburnt cheek with perpetual smiles; and, though, through the artifices of her seducer, his fine form and specious address had slightly touched her innocent heart, and she could not think of him with all her grandfather's austerity, yet in the dance the seducing stranger was forgotten.

ten. The present moment alone occupied her feelings,—the present moment,—when, gay in conscious innocence and beauty, she tripped lightly with her ruddy good-looking partner upon the green-sward; and now and then glanced a smile of the most enchanting sweetness and vivacity towards the window, at which she perceived her grandfather and his fair guests watching her every movement with admiration. "To seek to rob that cheek of its smiles! to transfix that happy heart with the stings of shame and anguish!" exclaimed Johanna. The beautiful cheek which she contemplated was indeed robbed of its smiles, and they saw her leave the dance with terror and precipitation. She rushed into the cottage, pale and breathless; and, sinking upon a chair, trembling and unnerved, burst into tears. The ladies rose from their seats at the window, and ran towards her: her grandfather took her in his arms, and entreated her to speak, and

say what had thus distressed her. "He is coming!" she exclaimed; "he is yonder, the perfidious stranger! Oh! hide me, hide me, from him!" Johanna looked eagerly towards the window. She saw not Lord Arunville, but a servant in his livery spoke another dreadful confirmation of his unworthiness. "But is he here himself?" cried she to Annette. "Oh! yes!" replied the affrighted girl; "I saw him, saw him too plainly! but, when he perceived me, or perhaps the crowd of villagers assembled here, he withdrew behind some trees." They strove to reassure her; and they soon succeeded, for her simple heart was as easily moulded to confidence as to tenderness. "And now, Adonia," said Johanna, "what are you and I to do? I would not meet Lord Arunville here for worlds! I could not bear to shew him that we had detected his perfidy, much as I despise him for it!" "And do you really feel thus cowardly?" said Adonia with dignity. "If he feels shame

shame at the sight of us, it is what he merits. We have no cause to blush; and the calm presence of conscious innocence is the best reproof to sculking guilt! I wish to see him, I wish to shew that I have discovered and despise him; and, if any thing will deter him from his guilty pursuit, it will be the consciousness that we have an eye upon him, and that Annette has made herself friends amongst those who have power to protect her from aristocratic licentiousness!" "But consider, Adonia," cried Johanna, "you may expose *yourself* to danger: you must be sensible that he once loved you; and if he *is* the villain that he seems—" "I fear him not!" replied Adonia calmly.— "Go, old man, and call him into your cottage, as if you knew nothing of his perfidy." "I!" cried the old man: "could I take hold of that hand in friendship which would have planted a dagger in my heart! invite *him* to my cottage who wanted to steal away its treasure! No,

No, my lady! you must excuse me."—"You have nothing to fear," replied Adonia. "Annette has nothing to fear when we are present.—He knows us, and dares not speak a word, nor even steal a look, insulting to virtue in our presence. But I wonder not at your reluctance to feign a part which your heart must recoil from: I will send my servant to him, and let him know at once *who* seeks him!" She beckoned Armaud to the window; "Go," said she, "to the gentleman who is loitering among yonder trees, and tell him that Mademoiselle de Rosier requests to speak with him." "There are two of them," said Armaud.—Adonia faltered from her purpose.—High-minded, romantic, girl! the visionary heroism soon returned.—"Yes, go to them, but do not tell my name; and yet he will know that you belong to the Marchioness." "No," said Armaud; I am out of livery, your ladyship knows." "Well, Armaud, bring them hither; but—" and her whole frame trembled,

trembled,—"do you be sure to remain near the house when you return." Johanna attempted to imitate her cousin's firmness, and to prepare for the interview which was to strike with shame and confusion the man whom she had once almost worshipped.

The old man's countenance highly condemned this unguarded procedure, though he was withheld from speaking his disapprobation by respect for Adonia, who on this occasion emitted all the romantic grandeur of soul which had characterized her father, and now wore an air of satisfied decision and confident integrity which silenced opposition. The old man could view the seducer of his child but in one character.—He trembled at his approach; and had conceived no idea of the surprise, the fear, the respect, which alternately crossed the stranger's features as he entered the apartment, and saw there guests so unlike the humble dwelling. It was

not Lord Arunville, though he greatly resembled him; but the varying countenance of the trembling Annette immediately declared that the person who entered was the same who had occasioned *her* distress. Adonia rose astonished, and Johanna's features were flushed with pleasure to find that she could acquit Lord Arunville, when the other stranger entered, and discovered to the now-shrinking Adonia the Comte de l'Avignon! the bane of her happiness,—her father's murderer! Pale, and almost lifeless, Adonia sunk back into her cousin's arms; who, ignorant of the Comte's person, knew not the source of her sudden emotion; but, attributing it to indisposition, called for some water, and applied the usual remedies to reinvigorate the ebbing spirits.—Her cares were successful; Adonia soon resumed herself, and answered the Comte's inquires after her health with calm politeness and dignified reserve. His arts, his perfidy to her father, had all been unveiled

veiled to her: she regarded him with disgust and abhorrence; yet had she firmness enough to stifle these feelings, and calmly to converse with him as long as she thought it proper to remain. She found that she could not pursue her design of *reproving Annette's seducer*, for he was a stranger to her, and her spirits were now scarcely sufficient to sustain *herself*; but, when she rose to depart, she begged that the old man would allow Annette to accompany her home. "I will protect her!" said she emphatically. "In the house of the Marchioness d'Estreaux, she will experience nothing but kindness; and, when you wish to see her, you will find her there, and receive a cordial welcome."

Thankfully did he accept her benevolent offer. Annette tied on her straw-hat to accompany them, and looked more lovely than ever in the eyes of her treacherous

treacherous admirer, who, awed and embarrassed, attempted not to oppose her departure; but with a silly air of affected calmness stood surveying the party by turns. De l'Avignon, with nearly the same feelings, offered them his carriage, which, he said, waited at the foot of the Avenue of Elms: and, after a moment's hesitation, intreated Adonia's permission to be admitted, *as an old friend*, at the Marchioness's hôtel. "If you can prove that you merit that title!" said Adonia, with more disdain than she had yet assumed. "Have I ever forfeited it?" said he submissively. "No! heaven is my witness!—How fervently I have ever loved you no tongue can tell; and at this moment (he whispered) it is in Adonia's power to command my heart and fortune; to raise herself from dependence to affluence; to become the ornament of a court, and the dearest jewel in De l'Avignon's possession!" "De l'Avignon!" said

said Adonia aloud, while a smile of scorn played upon her pale lips, "I know who and what you are!" She then walked calmly away from him; and, taking an arm of Annette and Johanna, she bid the old man adieu, and quitted the cottage, leaving the two abashed villains admiring, wondering at, and execrating, her. In a few moments they were overtaken by Annette's grandfather, and two stout healthy-looking peasants, who were his sons. "I have brought you an additional guard, my young ladies," said the old man.—"These villains will offer no violence to a poor old man like me; and, if they did, there are enough among the good vintagers who would not suffer poor old Anselm to come to harm.—But *you* are not safe with only one servant to protect you from their numbers, should they harbour any evil designs; and my sons will be proud to be permitted

mitted to attend you till you get safe home."

Adonia, who with all her heroism had begun to think with trembling of the distance from home, and to feel that they were but weak defenceless women, gratefully accepted of this prudent succour; and they all proceeded with lightened hearts. On the road they found two travelling carriages, attended by several servants: the one was like the Comte's; the other, which had four horses, and bore arms similar to Lord Arunville's, they guessed to be that in which the stranger had designed to bear away his victim from home and happiness. Annette shuddered and turned pale, while some tears stood in her eyes. She looked back towards the hamlet, and her tears flowed in silent torrents.——Some casuists would have said, that the tears

of

of joy which she shed for her deliverance were mingled with a few drops of parting regret for the only man she had ever seen, whose elevation of manners corresponded with the native refinement of her own heart. Perhaps it might be so;—yet I must still aver, that Annette's heart was pure, and that her expressions of gratitude to Adonia were as sincere as they were fervent.

CHAP. XXIX.

It need hardly be told that the Marchioness welcomed Annette, and applauded the spirited conduct of her charming Adonia.—It was exactly the conduct which she herself would have pursued. Nor can it be wondered that Adonia, the child of a father whose whole life had been guided by romantic feelings which scorned the restraints of prudence, and the ward of a woman whose only law was in her own mind, should

become

become in time a self-guided character, in spite of the timid sensibility with which nature had originally endowed her, and the weak and fragile form which enshrined her lofty soul. The mind, like the body, in youth, has sometimes periods in which it suddenly expands, and unaided sends forth stronger and more luxuriant shoots, in a short space of time, than any which all its former culture has had power to produce: a film seems to drop unassisted from the eyes; we perceive in a moment objects change the hues in which they have hitherto appeared to us; we wonder at our former blindness, and eagerly avail ourselves of the unexpected light, thus magically as it were opened upon our long-obtruded mind and senses! I do not pretend to account either physically or metaphysically for these rapid operations of the soul, which are set in motion sometimes by a single word, spoken in one of those congenial moments of which a celebrated philosoper says there are

are never two of equal measure in the course of one life; sometimes by the most common caprices of fortune; sometimes by catching a new idea from the works of an intelligent author, perhaps often perused before: I cannot say *why it is so*, but I, the author of these desultory memoirs, know *by experience* that the young mind does make these shoots, and receive these sudden illuminations.

Know, gentle reader, and do not frown because I stop here to give some account of myself, in order to exemplify the preceding assertion. Remember that I impeded not thy gentle curiosity from rushing at once on my heroes and heroines by any nicely-laboured preface, intended equally to demonstrate my own modesty and the merits of my work. Remember that I have feasted you with a plentiful oglio, of easy disgestion, of characters numerous enough to have peopled six histories as voluminous as this, without fatiguing your discrimination (as many

votaries

votaries of *Fabula*, labour to do) by giving every character some peculiar feature of distinction from the rest. Consider, I have bewildered you with no intricate plot; having with contented industry worked my way straight forwards, without seeing or considering what might lay before me. Take all this into consideration, and know, that, when at the age of fifteen I began this various history, I was myself as worthy of being called a hero or heroine (which ever you are good enough to suppose me) as any one personage who decorates these volumes; and had actually written three hundred and ninety-nine pages before I discovered that there was any other requisite to the character of a novelist beyond the two qualities which formed the sum total of my pretensions,—an exuberant and unpruned fancy, and a warm sensibility, which real sorrow had never weakened. It matters not how I made the discovery; but I own it deeply mortified me when I

 first

first became convinced that my work was very far from perfection; and I laid it by in disgust. But I did not, at the same time, lay aside the romantic dreams, the attenuated feelings, the glowing expectations, of life, which I had nursed in the solitude when most of the preceding, and many of the following, pages were written.—These, which I had bestowed on fictitious characters, became more vigorous and glowing when I appropriated them solely to myself. Every affection I formed became a deep-rooted habit, every wish was a hope! Judge, then, how the blow struck me with ten-fold fury when these affections were blighted, these hopes laid low! The misfortune which agonized me was in itself common, perhaps unimportant: to me, however, warm and sanguine, it seemed irreparable and unparalleled; and I bewailed it with all due, and all undue, distress for above a year; during which time my mind was suffered to stagnate, and my thoughts, possessed

possessed by one object, which wore the bitterest form of disappointment, gradually became more and more languid and incapable of exertion. I had attained the age of seventeen, gentle reader, fully persuaded that life was not worth caring for; that I should never taste of comfort more; and that all I had to do was to vegetate my allotted time in harmless supineness,—and die!—when a circumstance, which I need not stop to relate, obliged me to travel to scenes of that misfortune which I thought it an incumbent duty to bewail to the latest moment of my existence; and I expected nothing less but that at sight of this talismanic place, which I had never visited since, I should find a period to my woes in death!

Do not laugh at me, gentle reader, though I am disposed to sport with myself. The sorrows which flow from an affectionate young heart to the memory

of a juvenile friend, who was the companion of childhood, the idol who gave additional brilliancy by sharing them to the happy days of youth, are, however visionary, sacred to the feeling heart.—I reached the dreadful place, the scenes where, when last I saw her there, my poor young friend had sported in blooming beauty and happy innocence; but my ratio of *real* feeling had long been expended.—I neither wept nor died! I was amazed at my own insensibility; I retraced every walk which we had trodden together; I stopped and looked at every tree or cottage which she had made me remark: still I felt no new emotion. I returned to the house, and visited what had once been her apartment: it was occupied by another, and no object in it, no article of her apparel, lay there, to shew that *she* had ever tenanted it. I saw her sisters, her affectionate brothers, serene and gay; even her aged parents had recovered their cheerfulness, and every thing around her

her former habitation seemed to echo to what my heart so often repeated, "She is gone for ever!" This simple sentence had not struck me till now in its fullest sense: I now saw that she was indeed *gone for ever!* but that the world went on as before. "The keel had parted the tide," but the waters had closed upon the passing furrow, and again held on their accustomed course. I awoke as from a dream. Vivacity was the natural temper of my mind, and I was surprised to find that it needed little exertion to reinstate it there. I became sensible of powers I had never known before; of a susceptibility of happiness I had hitherto supposed for ever extinct; and now, blaming the romantic feelings which had so long weighed me down in visionary wretchedness, I examined my heart rigorously, and laboured to extirpate them—The task was not an easy one; for, though I ceased to look back with regret on any other evil than time mis-spent, I could

not forbear still decking out the future with sanguine images of a prolific fancy: but I was aided in my endeavours to gain acquaintance with sober reality by commerce with the world. I was called upon to act for myself; and, entering the busy scenes of life, from which I had hitherto been much withdrawn, I found the world neither inhabited by "devils nor demigods;" and in process of time was reconciled to acknowledging that I belonged only to a mingled and imperfect race of beings, among whom virtue *may* be preserved, and contentment *may* be attained; but neither of them without steady vigilance and undeviating resolution. But what a falling-off was here, from the "love ever new, and friends without a fault," with which my imagination had once peopled the world!—a life of *comfort*, and friends who *may* be good, if they are properly *careful*! O Adonia! shall I ever reconcile you to such low fare, after having nursed you so long on "delicate sensibilities,"

sibilities," and " romantic illusions?" No! I believe I have not yet magnanimity enough to condemn you to such a change at once;—but I will try on you the operations of time.

Time has wrought wondrous changes on myself, and but a short time too. Though, since I began these memoirs, I have added little or nothing to my stock of book-learning; and I do not mean to affront you, my patient reader, by supposing that you have not already discovered that stock to be sufficiently scanty, without requiring that I should be the herald of my own shame; though I am sensible that my story might have been better con trived, my characters more natural and varied, my language more correct, and, above all, that the political confab between the Marchioness and my friend Johanna, in the 136th and few following pages of this volume, might at least have been disguised by a newer dress, I am contented in my nineteenth year to aban-

don all struggle for the literary *eminence* to which I once aspired, and to resume without loss of time, and send into the world with all its imperfections on its head, a novel, which only a few months ago I threw by me as hopeless of completion.—My motive for this intrusion on the public *is not a personal one*, or I might perhaps blush to avow that "I write for fortune, not for fame." But, if my book should have the good fortune to experience a reception equally favorable with the middle class of the other novels of the day, and thence enable me to assist in relieving the necessities of a very near and dear friend, (plunged in unexpected misfortunes, and yet too delicate to accept the common modes of succour, as likely to inconvenience those she loves,) I shall not regret having sacrificed, to obtain such a recompence, the feelings which would otherwise have deterred me from exposing myself to the imputation of vanity or the reproofs of criticism.

Gentle

"Gentle reader, another apostrophe or two, and I will impose my egotisms upon thy indulgence no longer.—If thou art fifteen, I know thou wilt sympathise in my page, and read it through with as much avidity as thou hast haply read fifty other such productions of fancy before; I therefore give it to thee with *pleasure*. If thou art seventeen, and thine eyes begin to open upon the fallacies of life, while thy heart yet remains enthralled by its deceitful promises; if thy mind begins to fill with new ideas, and to obtain views of its own capacity which it knew not of before, thou wilt perhaps be tempted to smile at a tale so flimsily wrought; but thou wilt nevertheless peruse it, and seek eagerly for its catastrophe. To thee I give it with *confidence*; for thou wilt be a partial, although thou shouldest not be an undiscerning, critic; as our hearts are commonly most bigoted to our mistaken views of life, in the moment when the understanding is preparing

to renounce them.—If thou art even, like me, verging towards thy twentieth year, and hast for ever bidden adieu to romantic expectation and high-wrought sensibilities, I do not *fear* thee. Thou wilt find nothing here which can contaminate; and it may not be unpleasing to thee to have thy former feelings awakened by fictitious distresses, especially when thou hast heard the simple apology of an author of thine own age.—From readers of more advanced years, and of better-stored minds, I have only to entreat forbearance: I cannot accurately judge of *their* feelings, but I believe that every year produces some revolution in our sentiments; and such as these may be disposed to treat me with severity. But I cannot stay to deprecate the criticism of others farther; nor must I allow myself to pursue my own. I must not falter from my purpose, nor anticipate aught which may hereafter make me repent having thrown upon the mercy of the world a work whose only engine

engine was the hand of fancy,—a novel which asks not for fame, but *forbearance*,—which hopes not to inform, but to amuse without injuring.——

"Well, Annette," said Adonia, "I have obtained the Marchioness's permission to retain you here as long as you choose to stay, or as long as your grandfather can spare you; and we will not misemploy the time. I must have you taught some art, which may hereafter be of service to you, should you ever find it necessary to leave your native hamlet for more active scenes of life; but it must be something which I can instruct you in myself; for I wish you to live entirely in my apartment, and not to mingle with the servants, who are in general too corrupted to be safe companions for one of your simple honesty. (Annette sighed heavily, and in her heart thought that this would be a grievous confinement.) You must besides be careful of not being seen by

 these

these strangers, or meeting with any of their servants; so that it will be best to have you always near me." She then asked whether she could read and write; and to her surprise, and perhaps disappointment, (for she was eager to have the merit of instructing her herself in what would be useful,) Annette gave good specimens that she could do both more than tolerably. "Had she learned any kind of needle-work?" "Yes, she had been accustomed from her childhood to make all her own clothes, and often to assist her aunts with theirs." (Her father and mother were both dead.) "Well, Annette, what *can* I teach you?" Annette declared there was nothing she should like better than to learn the foreign language in which Miss Fitzwilliam and her benefactress sometimes conversed; "for," said she, "I think it must be a fine thing to be able to discourse without being understood by every body." "This is a strange notion for you to have," said Adonia, fixing a

look

look of deep scrutiny upon her, as if to penetrate whether there were not some artful motives lurking beneath the simplicity of her words; but Annette's countenance shrunk not from her inquiry. It remained open and composed, and she persisted in her desire to be taught English with an innocent and girlish eagerness which soon dissipated the transient suspicion. Adonia consented to indulge her. " But," said she, " your hands may be employed in something more useful, at the same time that you are learning English, and I must have you choose some work."—She then shewed her a piece of flowered muslin, which Johanna and she had been jointly employed upon, on which all the varieties of fine needle-works were displayed. Annette had never seen any thing so beautiful before, and immediately declared that nothing would make her so happy as to be able to manage her needle with equal skill." " If I could work as well as this," said she, delighted,

" I might

"I might make a fortune as well as our neighbour, Madame Colville, who owns that fine house to the left of our hamlet; and I assure you, she purchased it all by sewing in this manner for the muslin-sellers at Auvergne. Holy mother! if I could become as rich as her, I should make my dear grandfather so happy!" Adonia was charmed with her eagerness; and the same day they began their lessons, in which Johanna insisted that she should concur; and *she* became her chief instructress in English, while Adonia directed the operations of her needle. Johanna did not attempt to teach her English grammatically, as it would have been a work of more time and attention than she thought necessary to bestow on an acquirement which, to one in Annette's situation, she could not but consider wholly superfluous: but the facility with which she learned by heart the familiar phrases she commenced with, and the quickness of her apprehension, rendered the

the task of instructing her in speaking it both easy and delightful. Nor was her progress in needle-work less rapid. Stimulated by the visionary expectation of "making a fortune like Madame Colville's," and repaying her beloved grandfather's tenderness by enabling him to end his days in ease and affluence, she received Adonia's lessons with the utmost attention and gratitude; and, though her hands were somewhat spoiled by the coarse work in which they had formerly been employed, her fingers, naturally delicate and well-formed, soon recovered their pliability; and she wrought with a neatness and expedition which amply satisfied Adonia's wishes, and gratified her benevolent heart with the belief that Annette would indeed be able to turn this new acquirement to some future account.

Delighted with the idea of active utility, and being really attached to her young *protégée*, whose endearing gratitude

tude and artless vivacity spoke her contentment in every word and look, Adonia was not sorry to find their stay at Montpelier week after week prolonged by the Marquis's advice, notwithstanding it was contrary to her expectations, and St. Loudon was in Paris,—St. Loudon, of whom she had often thought with a sigh since that mournful morning when he bade her adieu. But these sighs she now began to blush for, and to stifle in their first movement with watchful vigilance. St. Loudon, now acknowledged to be of birth equal to her own, and in the prospect of rank and affluence, availed himself not of these expectations to engage her heart or solicit her hand. He had parted from her without a word to confirm the attachment which his conduct had once evinced, and now by his silence (for he might at least, she thought, have written to the Marchioness) he plainly shewed that *her* idea was not mingled with his future wishes or his prospects.

She

She had passed the crisis of her sensibility, she thought: she had surmounted an-guish, in the loss of her father, which she believed could never be exceeded; and she therefore judged, that the mind which had been able to conquer its greatest mis-fortune could not, but by its own fault, be overpowered by less evils. In find-ing herself capable of being useful, which she learned from Annette's preservation and her daily improvements under her in-structions, she found that the heart might be more nobly employed than in brooding over the romantic dreams of an unrequited sensibility; and she determined to think no more of St. Loudon, until he should unequivocally claim her hand, and could prove that his suit was sanctioned by rea-son and prudence.

Her efforts were in a great measure suc-cessful. She learned to think of him without the keen anguish with which doubt had at first pierced her heart, when-

ever

ever the idea of his unaccountable silence occurred to her.—She abandoned the romantic castle-building with which, after his departure, she had for a while amused her fancy. Those gay sketches of future happiness, where *he* was the prominent figure which gave life to the landscape, were all forbidden to rise up before her. But what most assisted this self-victory was a novel of Voltaire's, which she one day took up by accident. With a few strokes of that bold and irresistible satire so peculiarly the characteristic of his pen, he laid open the ridicule of an intelligent mind wasting its powers on dreams of impracticable expectation; and held up to view, with keen and taunting irony, the self-created imbecility of a young person who had "forgotten how to act becomingly, in studying how to feel acutely." The portrait struck her forcibly; for she had just been thinking of herself, and of the many hours she had wasted in sickly reflections and fruitless melancholy.

"I must

"I must learn to act," said she; "and not to feel." From this moment her mind became more vigorous, and her feelings less acute: her temper recovered its vivacity, and her body its elasticity. She read, she inquired, she reflected: every day added something to her stock of new ideas; every day contributed to brighten the prospect, once so cheerless, which lay before her.—Annette, whom she had saved from ruin; Annette, whom she instructed, grew more and more amiable and engaging; and she contemplated this work of her hands with all the glowing pleasure of young benevolence. "The feeling of an expanding mind, and renovated pleasure, which you describe, my dear Adonia," said Johanna one day, when she had been telling her of the happy change she had made in her estimate of life, "reminds me of a little poem which was written by a friend of my mother's, and given by her to poor Lord Stavordale.

RESIGNATION,
AN ALLEGORICAL SKETCH.

DESPONDENCE crush'd me !—" Hated life !"
I cried, " why art thou mine ?
Why must I loathe this fev'rish strife,
Nor dare my post resign ?
Oh ! happy they who in the grave
Hear not the tempest round them rave !
Forget to mourn what nought can heal,
Forget to wish what nought can give !
Such blest supineness could'st thou but reveal,
I would not hate thee, life ! but bear to live."

The sun was set, the winds were still ;
No sound was heard, save where yon rill
Distils a gently-murm'ring stream,
Which faintly smil'd to Cynthia's beam.
The scudding clouds athwart *her* brow
Would oft a dark'ning bandeau throw,
Which, drawn aside, disclos'd her face,
Like the fair lily's, when a stream of light
Pours o'er her velvet-leaves a purer white,
And with th'alternate shade contrasts its grace.

Ah ! who has seen that lily weep
And hang her head ? Or o'er the steep,
When the mild queen of night
Sails among shadows,—who her circlet bright
Has seen invested with a misty veil,
Then scattered, pale,
Yet giving to the pensive gazer strange delight ?
(For oft such mimic sadness yields a charm,
Philosophy to move, and apathy to warm ;)
Such was the maid who burst upon my sight !

No,

No rosy-tincture flush'd her cheek,
No joyous liquid fill'd her eye;
Health long had ceas'd to revel there;
And ever and anon that eye would speak,
And tell the secret of a lurking care;
Though with a smile so sweetly sly
She strove to hide it in submission meek,
That anguish seem'd than laughing mirth more fair!
Oh! what a face was hers, and how it stole
By magic sympathy my drooping soul!

The faithful partner of her way,
A little dog, was seen to stray
In many a circle far and wide,
Which frequent ended by her side;
Where, fawning, he would seek to move
The kind remembrance of her eye:
Oh! then a pang she seem'd to prove!
"Poor hungry dog! sole friend! must thou too die?"
She said, and then with firmer step she trod,
And upward look'd, and rais'd her soul to God!

So mildly proud, so firmly meek,
She won the love she did not seek;
And, tho' myself a prey to woe,
With wish redressful hers I sought to know.
I spoke,—when, lo! a cheering smile
Kindled on her tear-blanch'd cheek;
"'Tis I, who would *thy* woe beguile!"
"Mine here finds no redress," she said, and none I seek:
To me bright Hope's best anodynes are giv'n,
For *Resignation* is the ward of heav'n!"

She

She told a true and simple tale;
'How little would the tears avail
For blessings lost that flow'd!
She bade me woo prolific Hope again;
" Was never Hope," she said, " implor'd in vain,
To cheer the way-worn pilgrim's darkest road."
Mild were her counsels, and I them obey'd:
My friend, my guide, the maid became;
She drew me forth from Solitude's drear shade,
Where brooding mem'ry fans her fruitless flame.

Life, that seem'd a waste forlorn,
Dawn'd another April morn;
I felt the chill blast milder grow:—
" *Think* that thou may'st be blest, and prove it so!"
She said; and, lo! my tears forgot to flow.
I found another friend, another love;
And, when she could not quite reprove
The pang of suddenly-remember'd woe,
Would *Resignation*, with a bright'ning eye,
Whisper a future world, and point the sky!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

It is now time to return to the Comte de l'Avignon and his companion, whose resemblance to Lord Arunville had created such unfavorable doubts of the latter; and it is first necessary to account for the unexpected appearance of the Comte, at a time when it may be supposed that his presence was much wanted in Paris; both from the state of political affairs, and the business on which St. Loudon and his friends were gone thither.

It happened that just at this period he had found it prudent to withdraw himself from court, in order to avoid being employed by the King on some new and coercive measures of government, in which he did not wish to appear, and which were to be put into immediate execution; and feigning sudden illness, he asked and obtained permission to retire for a few weeks to his estate in Languedoc. His designs on Adonia had been suspended, but not relinquished. Her idea still reigned unrivalled in his heart. To obtain such a companion for his softer hours, to subdue her haughty virtue by those arts of insinuatory tenderness in which he had so often proved successful, was not less than ever the object of his eager wishes. He was ignorant that *she* had detected him as the author of her father's disgrace, though he was conscious that this instance of his perfidy had not escaped public observation; and he still thought that he might recall the flattering

ing preference which she had once given him, could he but find means to re-establish his former free access to her society; which had first been interrupted by her illness, and was farther precluded by the haughty reserve of the Marchioness, who he knew had always been his enemy. But he was politically connected with the Marquis d'Estreaux, and they were personally intimate; so that he would have needed no other pretext for visiting them at Montpelier, than that which these circumstances furnished him with, had he not felt when he arrived there, that there is no trial so daunting to conscious guilt as that of acting a specious part before those whom it has injured. "When guilt knows itself to be detected, it is bold and shameless; but while it hopes for, and yet doubts, concealment, what can be more timid? what more meanly cowardous?"

De l'Avignon had been overtaken on the road to Montpelier, and near his own

 chateau,

chateau, by the Honorable Mr. Grybton, a brother of Lord Arunville's; who was travelling to join his Lordship at the former place, and had in his possession a letter of introduction from the Marquis d'Estreaux to the Marchioness. De l'Avignon had frequently met him in Paris in the same circles which he frequented, and they agreed to continue their route together. Grybton was easily prevailed upon to rest a few days at the Comte's chateau, which was only at the distance of half a league from the high road; and it was while they stopped here that they missed the party destined from Paris, as well as the solitary and wretched Lord Arunville; who, eager to execute the romantic projects of benevolence to which his fancy had resorted as a relief from disappointed hope, had travelled with such expedition as to have soon left behind him the party who set out the day before. Mr. Grybton was in no hurry to deliver his credentials to the Marchioness, from

from the representation which the Comte thought proper to make of her haughty and unconciliatory manners; and De l'Avignon himself determined to wait the event of an accidental meeting before he should attempt any other means of introducing himself.

Foiled in his attempt to carry off Annette, whose beauty had fired his imagination, and whose artless sensibility deeply touched his heart, Grybton would now have quitted Montpelier, since he found himself disappointed in his expectation of meeting his brother; to discover whom had been the chief object of his directing his course thither. But De l'Avignon, who wanted his presence, artfully hinted to him, that, through *his* acquaintance wlth the Marchioness's family, Annette might yet be recovered. Ridiculing the easiness with which he had allowed his schemes to be baffled by a girl like Adonia,

nia, and the unmanliness of quitting a pursuit like this without making one more effort to accomplish his purpose, he at length persuaded him to give up his design of returning, and engaged him in the gaities of the place. *These* Grybton soon found very congenial to his taste. De l'Avignon introduced him to several families of distinction, among whom his fine person and insinuating address made his society a welcome acquisition: and a physician, whom he consulted upon some trifling indisposition, advised him to remain at Montpelier *as a matter of the utmost importance.* But neither De l'Avignon nor Grybton had yet found means to forward their different schemes. Adonia's treatment of the former at the cottage of old Anselm had convinced him that his arts were now unveiled to her; and, in consequence of this same unlucky rencontre, the latter felt less desire than ever to introduce himself to the Marchioness;

chioness; and had only once been able to procure a distant sight of Annette.

About a fortnight after their arrival, the Comte received an express from Paris, containing political intelligence of the most alarming nature, and an order from the King to return thither without loss of time. This order he found it necessary to obey immediately, and Grybton at his request changed the first intention he had persuaded him into, of remaining some time longer at Montpelier, and accompanied him back to the capital. The King was at Versailles, to which place the Comte proceeded, without stopping a moment to inquire the news of Paris: but what was his astonishment, when, on being introduced to the King's presence, he beheld the injured, the fugitive, St. Loudon; and heard himself called upon to deliver up the credentials of his birth! D'Orville had found a friend at court, through whose means he had been admitted to the King's

King's presence; and had laid before him such a statement of his nephew's case, as he thought would most effectually counteract any designs which the Comte might have formed to withhold from him his just rights. The King knew the Comte to be capable of any villany to promote his own interest, and therefore hesitated not a moment to exert the arm of power in behalf of the claimant who appealed to his protection. The narrative of Lord Stavordale's life was in Ferdinand's possession: it explained the nature and cause of the singular bond by which De l'Avignon had made himself responsible for Ferdinand's protection and reinstatement in his rights, and specified the other papers which had been left in his hands. These papers were now demanded. Ferdinand had been of age above a month: the Comte was absolved from the secrecy prescribed by his vow; and it rested in the minds of his confronters, whether or not the treatment which had driven Ferdinand

to

to withdraw himself from his protection was liable to the penalty attending the infringement of the contract. With a generosity which would not permit him to add any embarrassment to the feelings of an humbled enemy not requisite to the main end of his appeal, Ferdinand, who knew the state of the Comte's finances, not only defended every argument which could be brought forward in his justification with real earnestness; but declared himself ready and willing, whenever it should be in his power, to acknowledge the sense he retained of his kindness to him in the earlier part of his life, by the payment of that sum which was to have been the reward of the strict fulfilment of all the particulars of his trust. After an exoneration so liberal, and attested by the presence of such respectable and august witnesses, the Comte could hardly be suspected of harbouring any fraudulent design; when, to their infinite disappointment, he declared that the papers in question

were no longer in his possession. He delivered such an unequivocal relation of the transaction by which he had committed them to the Abbé Poverlerie's charge, and so candid an avowal of the motives of conscience which had induced him to make this consignment, aided by such plausible and affecting eloquence, that even those who came to be accusers felt for a moment as if they had been the defamers of innocence. But it was but for a moment! After some deliberation, the King judged it proper to wait the result of a farther search after Poverlerie, before the Comte should be legally acquitted. He was therefore put under arrest, and conducted to a place of secure but lenient confinement. Though Ferdinand warmly interceded against this measure, as from a knowledge of his character he was fully convinced that regard for his own interest would have withheld the Comte from the falsehood which the King seemed to suspect, his Majesty would not

not be persuaded to retract it. He had indeed other reasons for the severity of his decision, which he had only availed himself of this pretext to cover. The Comte, never a favorite of the King's, had of late become equally the object of his dislike and suspicion: first, from the keenness and malignity with which he had engaged in the prosecution of De Bellefonde's trial,—the man whom he so well knew had been his most partial friend and zealous benefactor, and, lastly, from the detection of Cardinal T's conspiracy; in which, from his political and personal intimacy with him, De l'Avignon was generally suspected of having been a party concerned, although sufficient proof could not be obtained to warrant his being indicted as such.

The Comte submitted to the decree of arrest with his customary speciousness. He acknowledged that his late unworthy treatment of St. Loudon apparently justified

tified the suspicions of the King; but, acquitted by his own conscience, he said, and certain of being one day justified, he would patiently wait the event of the measures which were set on foot for discovering the retreat of the Abbé Poverlerie; whose testimony would at once free his conduct from every unjust suspicion relative to the papers in question. But the idea of losing Adonia, of beholding a successful rival in St. Loudon, whose birth was now known to be equal to her own, and whose expectations were such as to sanction his addresses, assailed his mind with the pangs of mortified pride, and contributed to render his confinement hourly less supportable. A thousand times did he execrate the cowardice of heart which had withheld him from obtruding himself on the Marchioness at Montpelier, and striving by stratagem once more to ingratiate himself with Adonia; whose tender and unsuspicious bosom, he thought, could hardly have remained proof

proof against those arts to regain her confidence which had so often triumphed over the caution of others more experienced. He even lamented that he had not tried more daring measures; and resolved, that, whenever he should be able to effect his release, the first moments of liberty should, if possible, be employed in accomplishing that scheme by force which he had neglected so favourable an opportunity of attaining by finesse, viz. to carry off Adonia to a retired villa which he possessed in the East of Normandy, and make her his, without the formality of a priest, in spite of her prayers or reluctance. While these thoughts were brooding in his depraved mind, he neglected no art to ingratiate himself yet farther with Mr. Grybton, whose still-existing passion for Annette might, he thought, be used to assist his own designs on Adonia: he, therefore, fed that passion by frequent and lavish encomiums on her beauty, and by representing in the most

alluring colours the charm of possessing a heart so artless and susceptible.

Grybton had indeed chiefly consented to accompany the Comte back to Paris, (where it was their intention to remain no longer than the latter's business absolutely required, and then to re-visit Montpelier,) from the expectation that Annette, on hearing of his departure, would return to her grandfather's cottage; where, defended only by his simple honesty, and her own, as he thought, fallible notions of virtue, she would become an easy prey to those arts which he did not dare to attempt while she continued to be protected by the Marchioness: the language too, which the Comte now used on this subject, more and more confirmed him in his desire of obtaining her. He had left a servant at Montpelier to watch her motions, and give him the earliest intelligence of her departure from the Marchioness's hôtel; but some weeks elapsing without

without bringing him any tidings of her that favored his designs, and once more plunged in gaiety and thoughtlessness, he would have recalled his servant, and given up the pursuit, had not the Comte's artifices from time to time counteracted these resolutions. Grybton possessed all Lord Arunville's exterior graces, without his acuteness of understanding, or native goodness of heart. Self-interest was his ruling principle, and pleasure his chief good; but in their pursuit he was timid and indolent, and it was easy for a man of the Comte's address to win his entire confidence, and render him, by flattering these propensities, the tool of his own designs. He thought himself in love with Annette, merely because she struck him as more beautiful than any woman he had lately seen. He would have given her up, because her seduction was attended with difficulty; but he was as easily persuaded to resume his hopes, and renew his attempts, when encouraged by one who

was

was more sanguine and enterprising than himself; and who, in manifesting a contempt of difficulty, rendered Grybton ashamed of appearing to be deterred by it. The Comte, though closely guarded, not being denied the visits of such of his friends as were untainted by political suspicion, Grybton could at all times obtain admission to his prison. Thus the intercourse which kept alive his design of returning to Montpelier received little check from the confinement of his friend; and six weeks more passed away almost unnoticed by the thoughtless Grybton, unproductive of any change in the situation of Annette that could authorize the designs which the Comte instructed him to cherish, yet without altering his plan; though, while he fancied himself passionately attached to Annette, he would in reality have given her up without a farther thought, or more than a momentary regret, had one defender of honor and innocence stood up to remonstrate against his unworthy pursuit.

CHAP. XXXI.

IN the mean while, Ferdinand and his friends remained in Paris, waiting tidings of the fugitive Abbé Poverlerie. It appeared from the whole tenor of Lord Stavordale's narrative, that Ferdinand had nothing to hope from the justice or affection of his relations; and without those proofs of his birth and of his father's marriage, which were so unfortunately in Poverlerie's hands, his claim as the grand-

son

son of Earl Wallingford could not legally be established without their voluntary concurrence: for Lord Stavordale's marriage with the unfortunate sister of Monsieur d'Orville, (or Stanhope, as we shall henceforth call him,) was not only unknown to his family, but, from certain circumstances stated in his narrative, nothing but the testimony of one of the witnesses of the marriage, or the evidence contained in his subsequent contract with De l'Avignon, (which was in Poverlerie's possession,) could satisfy the question of law respecting Ferdinand's legitimacy.—The uncertainty of his recovering these necessary papers seemed daily to increase. Encouraged for a while to believe that he should soon be in possession of distinction and affluence which might entitle him to seek an alliance with Adonia, with the sanguine eagerness of youth, which sees in the first promise of opening hope the completion of *all* its wishes, he had forgotten or disregarded the suspicion

cion so lately entertained of her preference of Lord Arunville; and, remembering only the friendship and esteem which she had so artlessly and fearlessly shewn towards himself, as an earnest of that warmer regard with which he hoped one day to inspire her, he lived over again in fond retrospection every hour which had been consecrated to happiness by her presence. Her look at one time,—her smile at another,—each accidental word of kindness or esteem which had dropped from her during the friendly intercourse that had subsisted between them at Montpelier,—and, above all, the fear she had expressed of his leaving her without saying adieu!—were now so many enchanting sketches, which fancy delighted to fill up with the brightest colouring of hope! Fanny Tracey, whom he formerly considered as a silly unformed girl, who, in the presence of Adonia, shrunk into insignificance, now became an object of interest and attention;

tion; for she had been the companion of Adonia, had seen her in her most retired hours, knew all her excellences, and was a warm and genuine encomiast of that unaffected sweetness and diffidence of manners which gave a finishing charm to her other accomplishments, and excited admiration without alarming jealousy.

Fanny Tracey was his friend, his counsellor, his companion; while she, delighted to engage attentions which had formerly been so entirely withheld from her; charmed by a gaiety congenial to her own, and really admiring the singular goodness of his character; lost no opportunity of flattering his feelings by introducing the subject which seemed ever uppermost in his thoughts. The correspondence which she kept up with Johanna furnished her with intelligence of Adonia's health, her amusements, and occupations; every circumstance of which was dear and interesting to St. Loudon;

and

and gladly would he have availed himself of this channel of communication, to convey to Adonia a faint picture of his heart, could he have overcome the timidity never separable from true attachment while there remains any obstacle for doubt to startle at.—" But how," he thought, " could he inform her that she possessed his heart, without discovering that his happiness depended on obtaining an interest in hers? and how could he with honor say aught which might interest her sensibility, until he could also seek to engage her hand, which, in his present uncertainty as to the establishment of those claims to fortune which would enable him to support her in affluence suited to her birth, was what he did not dare to think of?" Sometimes he wished that he could write to the Marchioness, (who had treated him with a distinction sufficiently flattering to embolden the wish,) that he might lay before her the secret of his heart, and implore her at

least

least to guard his treasure for a while from the importunities of other addresses. But again doubt of his own ultimate success, and a generous fear of restraining her heart's own free election, fettered his ideas, and deterred his pen. He would then recur to the assurances he had received that Adonia regarded him with esteem; and, from her rectified mind, he thought esteem was all that he could desire, until he himself should have sought to inspire a more exclusive sentiment by a declaration of his wishes and his hopes.

Soothing himself with the idea that he should soon be at liberty to make this declaration, he looked forward with eagerness to the completion of the business which still detained him in Paris. The interval of hope and gay-dreaming fancy served but the more to embitter the dreary reverse which he at length experienced, when he found that the most vigilant

measures

measures that could be pursued to discover the Abbé Poverlerie had proved abortive. The officers of justice, who had been dispersed through every part of the kingdom in quest of him, returned again hopeless and disappointed. The pursuit was abandoned, and Ferdinand and his friends saw that his only remaining prospect of success rested with his grandfather, Earl Wallingford; who, if still alive, (which they had reason to believe,) might perhaps be wrought upon by a proper appeal to the feelings of nature to receive him as his child, on the testimony of the narrative in their possession.

"I well know," said Admiral Tracey, "that he has always been considered a man of strict honor; and surely his son's hand-writing, and the evidence which *we* can give in support of Ferdinand's identity, ought to be sufficient to establish the claims of justice, though his heart

heart should be barred against those of natural affection"! "Time," said D'Orville thoughtfully, "must have softened his animosities. If he still lives, he must be on the verge of the grave. I remember him a fierce and haughty tyrant! an implacable and avenging enemy! Yet surely these characters must vanish before the approach of death!" But to Ferdinand, to whom it was big with tenfold importance, the hope of such a change now appeared involved in the most agonizing doubt; and every time that his thoughts recurred to the dreadful and mysterious narrative which manifested in every line the hopelessness of proceeding without the other testimonies of his birth, so unfortunately withheld from him, his dreams of futurity, his hopes of Adonia, died within him; and a thousand times he repeated to himself, "I have only been allured by hope, that I might feel more keenly the anguish of disappointment!" They now determined to proceed as expeditiously

peditiously as possible to England, and Admiral Tracey wrote to request that Johanna would immediately join them in Paris, if she still pursued her design of accompanying them. This letter was scarcely dispatched, before Ferdinand discovered that *she would need an escort in these turbulent times*, and immediately followed it in person. The thought of leaving France, abandoned to uncertainty, without once more seeing Adonia, was more than his philosophy could sustain, and he eagerly seized this pretext for obtaining another parting interview.—Here fortune had prepared for him a still-more unexpected pleasure; for he was not only to see Adonia, but she was to be the companion of his journey back.—The Marchioness had lately received her husband's so long delayed permission to return as soon as she chose to Paris; and Johanna had written to inform Miss Tracey at what time they might expect her, on the very day on which Admiral Tracey's

Tracey's letter was dated. Notwithstanding Adonia's resolutions of *prudence*, and the steadiness with which she had for some time repressed the idea of Ferdinand from mingling with her thoughts, an unusual gaiety exhilarated her mind as she made her preparations for the journey which was to conduct her to the place *he* inhabited: nor, with all her casuistry, could she conceal from herself that the hope of meeting *him* was the chief inspirer of this gaiety: but she strove to ascribe it solely to esteem for his virtues, and gratitude for the attentive friendship with which he had lightened so many of her heavy hours. "Surely there can be nothing improper in yielding to the influence of gratitude!" thought she; "and I may once more see this kind and excellent young man, once more thank him for his goodness to a poor suffering invalid, without again endangering the health of my mind by reviving the romantic dreams it once indulged in.—

I am

am certain of possessing his esteem, his good wishes; and surely I may return these unblamed! Is there any thing more consolatory than the friendship of those we esteem? any thing so delightful as meeting the kind welcome of a friend from whom we have been separated?" Her cheeks glowed with brighter roses, her fine blue eyes sparkled with the brilliancy of rekindled sensibility, and her dimpled smile spoke the enchanting eloquence of innocence united with pleasure, as she said to Miss Fitzwilliam, with a meaning air, "The day after to-morrow, Johanna, and two days after that, and we shall see *all* our friends again!" Her maid entered at this moment, and called her away to ask some directions in regard to the dress she was to wear on the road. "O thou wretch, to interrupt me just now!" she exclaimed; and gaily tripped away to her own apartment. The Marchioness had prepared for her a warm white-satin pélisse, lined with black fur; and a travelling

travelling cap of the same materials, which came close round her face, and was decorated with a large plume of black feathers.—" Well! my Lady-Marchioness, you are determined that I shall be vain of my person, inspite of fate!" said she; "for you could not have contrived any thing more becoming!" and, wrapping herself up in the pélisse, and carelessly putting on her furred cap, so as to throw a profusion of auburn curls upon her neck and face, yet without destroying the fine contrast which her dark ornaments gave to her fair and transparent skin, she ran back to the drawing-room, to exhibit her new accoutrements to Johanna.

The door was shut:—she threw it open, and skipped forwards; but her eye met not Johanna! She started back; her dark-plumed cap fell to the ground; her cheek could no longer be improved by any contrast, for she beheld St. Loudon!—St. Loudon, who, with transport but ill concealed

cealed by diffidence, came forward to meet her, and ventured to invite her hand.—Freely she gave it to him, and with a still-deeper blush pressed his with the kind welcome of unaffected pleasure; but, in a moment repenting the emotion she had betrayed; ashamed of the transport which thrilled her heart, yet unable to subdue it; and quite unnerved by the sudden surprise; she turned away from him, and burst into tears! Never were there feelings of more exquisite, more painful, delight than those now experienced by St. Loudon! Such a welcome from Adonia, such an involuntary and ingenuous sensibility, cancelled in a moment every former doubt; but delicacy suggested to him the impropriety of appearing too sensible of this unintended disclosure, and he strove, by apologizing for the abruptness of his arrival, to persuade her that he only attributed her emotions to the suddenness of surprise. Adonia improved the subterfuge, and, smiling through her tears,

tears,—"Yes, it was unfair," she said, "to send me no warning of your approach, when my good toilette-sylph must have whispered to you the manner in which I was employed. At once to have exposed my vanity and my weak nerves is more than even the comforts of my new pélisse can reconcile me to;" and, taking up her cap, which had fallen to the ground, she hastened out of the room. Her absence, however, was not a long one: she returned to him in a few minutes, composed and serene. Seating herself beside him, she inquired, with a kind but dignified solicitude, what had been the success of his journey to Paris; and, minutely attentive, obtained from him all the particulars of his fruitless errand. The deep concern which overspread her countenance when she heard how all his designs had been baffled by the impenetrable flight of the Abbé Poverlerie, the softened tone of her voice, the few words of real interest and condolence which

which falteringly broke from her, still farther confirmed the flattering ideas her reception of him had awakened; and, inspired by her kindness, every evil augury vanished from his mind. In seeing *her* lament his perplexities, he seemed already to have surmounted them; and with the hope that he yet might one day possess her heart, every other hope revived anew.

The entrance of the Marchioness, who had been absent on an airing, gave a new turn to the conversation, and she welcomed her young favorite with the most flattering regard. Ferdinand told her the object of his journey to Montpelier, and the Marchioness redoubled his pleasure by informing him that she herself was on the wing for Paris; and that he would have a more arduous task of knight-erruntry to perform than he had imagined; for that they would all enlist themselves under his protection. Gay, happy, and unem-

unembarrassed, not a thought lent to the past, nor a doubt to the future, Adonia and St. Loudon tasted, in the unrestrained conversation of genuine friendship and esteem, rendered doubly delightful by their late separation, all that could confine the restless desires of fancy to the present. Self-encouraged by the victory she had gained over her vain regrets for that separation, and exulting in those late acquisitions of mind which taught her to tranquillize her sensibilities and extend her plan of intellectual government, Adonia enjoyed the serene pleasure of these happy moments with confidence and delight. She told him of her studies, her amusements, since their parting, and the pleasure she had had in instructing Annette; while he, at her desire, gave an equally-minute detail of all that had interested him.—It was a pure and chastened tenderness that pervaded her heart, too tranquil to create alarm, and which, without perplexing herself to analyze,

analyze, she termed, friendship. Ferdinand's feelings were more complicated and tumultuous, but they were not less happy; and when he retired to rest, wondering how the day had passed so rapidly, he exclaimed to himself, "It is the first day of my existence!—I have tasted unmixed happiness!—Ah! these are indeed the happy moments of life!—but what pen can delineate them?

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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ERRATA TO VOL. III.

Page 18, line 5, *for* recreation *read* nature.

31,—— 8, *dele* he felt.

47,—— 3,——gloomingly, *read* gloomily.

51,——12, *for* Adonia glowed *read* Adonia's heart glowed.

143,——11,——replied Marchioness *read* replied the Marchioness.

186,—— 1,——plient *read* pliant.

17,——is *read* was.

242,—— 5,——of *read* for.

287,——18,——obtruded *read* obtunded.

308,——23,——when *read* where.

26,——Then *read* This.

312,——16,——insinuatory *read* insinuating.